





A

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH ARMY



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A History of The British Army

BY

THE HON. J. W. FORTESCUE

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Quae caret ora crux nostro?

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PREFACE

I HAD intended to publish the present volume and its successor, the Ninth Volume, together, bringing my narrative down to the close of the campaign of Waterloo. But the present war with Germany has deranged my little plans, as it has those of greater men. My Ninth Volume has been completed, as I had designed, so far as concerns my own task ; but my excellent and indefatigable coadjutor and cartographer, Mr. H. W. Cribb, has been taken from me for higher and more important work ; and the maps for this volume must perforce wait until that more important work be done. Even I have been torn away, not without a pang, from the labour that has engrossed the greater part of my waking moments during the past twenty years, and set down to write the narrative of a new war, more glorious, perhaps, to the British Army than any that has gone before it.

It seemed to me, therefore, best to publish the present volume at once, rather than delay it for an indefinite time until the maps for the Ninth Volume should be ready ; and in laying it before the public I must again express my grateful acknowledgments to

the Duke of Wellington and to Professor Oman for much kind and cordial assistance. For the maps, which have attained (as I believe) an excellence almost unknown hitherto in England, I have to thank the skill and industry of Mr. Cribb and the enterprise of his chief, Mr. Emery Walker.

When happier days shall come, I hope to publish my Ninth Volume as speedily as possible. Indeed, though it be a bold thing to say in a man who has undertaken to write a history of the present war, I do not despair, if life and health be granted to me, of completing my *History of the British Army*, if not to the year 1870, as I had originally proposed, at least to the death of the Duke of Wellington in 1852.

J. W. F.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
Perceval's failure to strengthen his Cabinet	3
The King's illness	3
Perceval retains power under the Regency	4
Palmerston's measures for recruiting the Army	4
Bank-notes made legal tender	5
Weariness of Napoleon's rule on the Continent	6
Discontent of his lieutenants	7
Bernadotte elected Crown Prince of Sweden	8
Alienation of Russia from France	8
Napoleon's recruiting measures	10
Situation of the French armies in Spain	11
Napoleon's refusal to appoint a Commander-in-Chief in the Peninsula	13
His redistribution of commands in Spain	14
Winter operations in Catalonia, 1810-1811	15
Recapture of Figueras by the Spaniards	17
Macdonald besieges Figueras	18
Soult ordered to march northward to the help of Masséna	18
He advances to Olivença	21
Fall of Olivença ; Soult invests Badajoz	22
Death of Romana	23
Soult defeats Mendizabal at San Cristobal	24
Difficulties of Wellington ; his generals	25
Delay of reinforcements ; lack of specie	26
Maladministration in Portugal	27

	PAGE
Insanity of his Military Secretary	29
Obstinate immobility of Masséna	30
D'Erlon marches to reopen communication with Masséna	31
D'Erlon's failure and its causes	32
Masséna resolves to retreat	33
Extreme skill of his dispositions	35
Wellington begins the pursuit	37
He sends Beresford with two divisions towards Badajoz	37
Soult captures Badajoz, and starts for Andalusia	38

CHAPTER II

Designs of the Allies upon Cadiz	40
A British force landed at Tarifa	42
Lapeña's march against the rear of the French besieging Cadiz	42
Marshal Victor's dispositions to foil him	46
The field of Barrosa	47
The Spaniards open the action	48
Victor begins his attack	49
Lapeña's false movement	50
Graham decides to counter-attack	53
The battle of Barrosa	53
Retreat of the French	61
Lapeña's delinquencies	62
Strength of the contending forces	63
Their casualties	64
Pusillanimity of Lapeña after the action	65
His failure to follow up his success	66
Controversy over the operations	67
The opportunities lost by Lapeña	68

CHAPTER III

The retreat of Masséna	70
Insubordination of d'Erlon and Ney	72
Wellington's pursuit ; action at Pombal	73

CONTENTS

ix

	PAGE
Indolence of Montbrun	74
Combat of Redinha	74
Masséna reaches Condeixa	77
Maneuvres at Condeixa	79
Combat at Casal Novo	81
Masséna hastens his retreat	83
Combat of Foz d'Arouce	84
Beresford again sent southward	87
Masséna takes position on the Alva	88
Skirmish on the Alva	89
Misconduct of Reynier	90
Masséna continues his retreat	91
Captures made by the British	92
Masséna plans new invasion of Portugal	93
Ney refuses obedience	94
He is deprived of his command	95
Futility of Masséna's new campaign	95
It is abruptly closed by Wellington	97
Action of Guarda	98
Masséna retires behind the Coa	99
Combat of Sabugal	100
Miscarriage of Wellington's plans	109
Behaviour of Reynier	110
Casualties on both sides	111
Masséna continues his retreat	112
Trant's raid upon Val de la Mulla	113
Masséna retires to Salamanca	113
His losses during the retreat	114
Inefficiency of Wellington's generals	115
Bad state of the Portuguese troops	116
Wellington's distrust of the English Ministers	117
His excusable injustice towards them	119

CHAPTER IV

Beresford detached to attack Soult	120
Soult captures Campo Maior	121
<i>b</i>	

	PAGE
Brave defence of the fortress	121
Surrender of Alburquerque to Soult	121
Beresford's force and its march	122
Cavalry action of Campo Maior	124
Wellington's injustice to the Thirteenth Light Dragoons	132
The delinquencies of Long	133
The delinquencies of Beresford	134
His march delayed by the flooded Guadiana	137
His difficulties of supply	138
He invests Olivença	139
Fall of Olivença	140
Affair of cavalry at Los Santos	141
Wellington's instructions to Beresford	142
The train for the siege of Badajoz	143
Beresford invests Badajoz	144
Description of Badajoz	145
The siege opened	146
Soult moves to the relief of Badajoz	147
The siege raised	148
The want of a corps of Sappers	148

CHAPTER V

Masséna advances into Portugal	151
His difficulties with Bessières	151
The armies of Masséna and Wellington	153-4
The battle-field of Fuentes de Oñoro	155
First day of the battle of Fuentes de Oñoro	157
Second day of the battle of Fuentes de Oñoro	160
Retreat of Masséna	170
Failure of the French generals	173
Wellington's reasons for accepting battle	174
Blockade of Almeida	175
Brennier breaks the blockade	176
Wellington's wrath over this mishap	178
Masséna is superseded by Marmont	179

CHAPTER VI

	PAGE
Soult collects troops for a movement northward	181
Soult's and Beresford's movements	182
The battle-field of Albuera	183
March of the British to Albuera	184
The skirmish of the 15th of May	185
Junction of Blake with Beresford	187
Beresford's dispositions	188
The battle of Albuera	190
Defeat of the French	205
The losses of the British	206
The losses of the French	208
Apathy of Beresford on the 17th of May	209
Retreat of Soult on the 18th	209
Criticism of the rival commanders	210
The spirit of the British infantry	213

CHAPTER VII

Wellington projects the siege of Badajoz	216
Spencer left to command in the north	217
Cavalry action at Usagre	218
Want of siege-artillery	221
Wellington opens the siege of Badajoz	222
The siege raised	225
Causes of Wellington's failure	226
Marmont reorganises the Army of Portugal	227
He advances southward	228
Feeble behaviour of Spencer	229
Wellington resumes command	230
The army concentrated on the Caia	231
Soult's army joins Marmont's at Merida	231
Wellington's dispositions on the Caia	232

	PAGE
Mishap to the Eleventh Light Dragoons	235
Soult and Marmont fall at variance	236
Soult moves southward with part of his army	237
Marmont withdraws to the valley of the Tagus	238
Wellington cantons his army northward	238
Wellington's plans for a Spanish diversion	239
Movements of the Army of Galicia	240
Spanish success at Benavides; Bessières is superseded by Dorsenne	241
Activity of the guerillas in the northern provinces	242
Blake's diversion against Seville	242
Freire's diversion in Murcia	244
Ballesteros's division in the Sierra de Ronda	244
Suchet besieges Tarragona	245
Storm of Tarragona	247
Storm of Montserrat	248
Surrender of Figueras to Macdonald	248
Lacy's raid into France	248
Comparative fruitlessness of the Spanish operations	249

CHAPTER VIII

Wellington's design upon Ciudad Rodrigo	251
The collection of the siege-train	252
Blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo	253
Marmont's want of transport	254
His difficulties over reinforcements	255
Two French divisions added to the armies of the North and of Portugal	256
Napoleon's second camp at Boulogne	257
Wellington's inferiority in numbers to Marmont	258
Marmont advances to Ciudad Rodrigo	259
Affair of cavalry on the Azava	259
Combat of El Bodon	260
Peril of Wellington through Craufurd's disobedience	264

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Retreat of Wellington	265
He offers battle on the Coa	266
Marmont retires to his former cantonments	268
Wellington goes into winter-quarters	269
Hill's operations in Estramadura	270
His march to surprise Girard at Arroyo Molinos	271
Action of Arroyo Molinos	274
Losses of the French and of the British	276
Suchet's campaign in Valencia	277
He defeats Blake and captures Sagunto	278

CHAPTER IX

Castlereagh becomes Foreign Minister	280
The Duke of York reinstated at the Horse Guards	280
Admission of the principle of substitution in the Local Militia	281
Napoleon's anxiety concerning Spain	282
Tortuous policy of Prussia	283
She is compelled to an alliance with France	285
Alliance between France and Austria	285
Napoleon's failure to conciliate Sweden	286
The war between Turkey and Russia	287
It is ended by Stratford Canning	288
Napoleon's treatment of Poland	288
Disloyalty within the French Empire : Murat	289
Belgium	290
Holland and France	291
Napoleon's plans for the Peninsula	292
Marmont ordered to reinforce Suchet	293
Advantages to the French if Valencia were taken	294
Napoleon's treatment of Joseph	295
Incorporation of Catalonia with France	296
Joseph appointed nominally commander-in-chief in the Peninsula	298
Napoleon's overtures to England for peace	299
Naples and Lord William Bentinck	300

	PAGE
Bentinck's plan for an Austrian Archduke to liberate Italy	302
He proceeds to England to commend it to Ministers	303
Anxious state of affairs in Sicily	304
Peremptory measures of Bentinck	305
The King of Naples abdicates in favour of his son	305
Bentinck's projects of liberation	306
American relations with England : the question of the im- pressionment of seamen	307
Negotiations of Pinkney and Monroe for an amicable settle- ment	309
President Jefferson rejects the treaty signed by them	311
The incident of the <i>Leopard</i> and the <i>Chesapeake</i>	311
Canning offers reparation	311
Napoleon's measures for forcing the United States into war with England	312
The American embargo on vessels trading to foreign ports	313
Jefferson breaks off negotiations with Canning's envoy	314
Acute differences raised in America by the embargo	315
Napoleon makes it a pretext for confiscating American vessels	315
Repeal of the embargo : Madison elected President	316
David Erskine negotiates a treaty with the United States	316
It is rejected by Canning	317
New negotiation opened by Frederick Jackson	317
It is abruptly broken off by Madison	318
Pinkney unsuccessfully attempts to renew negotiations in England	318
Napoleon continues to flout the United States	319
Madison's attempt to coerce England	320
The incident of the <i>President</i> and the <i>Little Belt</i>	320
Madison hopelessly befooled by Napoleon	321
Attack on American troops by Tecumseh	322
The American army increased	322
The war-party in America gains the upper hand	323
The true grievances of America	323
Blunders of Jefferson and Madison	324

CHAPTER X

	PAGE
Soult resolves to attack Tarifa	326
The strength of his force	327
Marshal Victor arrives before Tarifa	328
Description of the place	329
The British Garrison	330
The division in its command	331
The French open the siege	331
Failure of the French assault	333
Wretched state of the besiegers	334
Victor raises the siege and retreats	335
The weather chiefly responsible for his failure	336
Wellington's opinion of the enterprise	337
Suchet defeats Blake and captures Valencia	338

CHAPTER XI

Great sickness in Wellington's army	340
Dearth of capable generals	341
Wellington's difficulties for want of specie	342
The organisation of transport and supply	344
Wellington's designs for the coming campaign	346
Movements of the French	347
Withdrawal of French troops to Russia	348
Assignment of new territory to the army of Portugal	349
Wellington's preparations for the attack on Ciudad Rodrigo	349
Investment of the fortress	350
Description of Ciudad Rodrigo	350
Storming of the redoubt on the Greater Teson	352
Progress of the siege	353
Leisurely proceedings of Marmont	354
Progress of the siege	356
Dispositions for the assault	358

	PAGE
The storm of Ciudad Rodrigo	360
Disorder after the place was carried	363
Defects in the conduct of the siege	365
Casualties of the British	366
Consternation of Marmont	367

CHAPTER XII

Wellington projects the siege of Badajoz	369
Return of both armies to their cantonments	370
Distribution of Soult's army	371
Confusion wrought by Napoleon's orders	372
Withdrawal of the Imperial Guard from Spain	373
Collection of the British siege-train	374
Difficulties with the Portuguese Government	376
Wellington's instructions to Spanish and Portuguese commanders	377
Formation of the corps of Sappers and Miners	379
Wellington marches southward	379
Marmont's dispositions	380
Embarrassments of Soult	381
Investment of Badajoz	383
Description of the fortress	384
The siege begun	385
Assault and capture of Picurina Redoubt	389
Progress of the siege	390
Movements of Soult and Marmont	391
The bastions of La Trinidad and Santa Maria breached	392
The fortress to be assaulted in defiance of all rule	393
Philippon's preparations	394
Orders for the assault	394
The assault on Badajoz	396
Capture of Badajoz : dissolution of the British army	403
British casualties in the assault	405
Criticism of the conduct of the siege	406

CONTENTS

xvii

CHAPTER XIII

	PAGE
Soult's troubles in the south	411
Wellington's feint at invasion of Andalusia	412
Cavalry action of Bienvenida	413
The advance of Marmont	415
Misconduct of Victor Alten in Portugal	416
The situation saved by Colonel Le Cor	417
Wellington returns northward	418
Marmont retires to Salamanca	419
The French disasters were due to Napoleon	420
Marmont and Soult canton their armies	422
Wellington does likewise	423
Hill prepares to attack the bridge-head of Almaraz	424
Soult mistakes his movements for invasion of Andalusia	425
The defences of Almaraz	425
Hill's march upon Almaraz	426
The attack on Almaraz	427
Eskine spoils Hill's attempt on Mirabete	429
Distress of the French armies for victuals	430
The suspension-bridge of Alcantara	431

CHAPTER XIV

New grouping and organisation of the French armies in Spain	433
Successes of the Spanish guerillas in the northern provinces	436
Also in Catalonia and Southern France	438
Insuperable difficulties of Joseph as Commander-in-Chief	439
The generals, except Marmont, refuse to answer his letters	441
Joseph issues his orders for the coming campaign	442
Insubordination of the generals	443
Despair of Joseph and Jourdan	444
Wellington declines to invade Andalusia	445
His orders to Hill	446
His orders to the Spaniards and Portuguese about Galicia	447

	PAGE
Wellington's loss of good officers at this time	448
Arrival of Mr. Larpent as Judge-Advocate-General	449
The dearth of specie	450
Movements of Hill	450
Discreditable mishap to Slade's cavalry at Maguilla	452
Extreme caution of Hill in manœuvring against d'Erlon	453-457
'This caution due to Wellington's orders	458
Disgraceful behaviour of Soult	459

CHAPTER XV

Wellington advances upon Salamanca	460
Siege of the forts of Salamanca	461
Advance of Marmont : Wellington suspends the siege	462
Marmont retires to Aldearrubia	463
Wellington's counter-dispositions	464
Fate of the forts of Salamanca	465
Review of criticisms passed on Wellington and Marmont	466
Retreat of Marmont	467
The deadlock on the Douro	468
Marmont disappointed of reinforcements	469
Anxious position of Wellington	470
His discontent with Lord William Bentinck	471
Marmont decides to take the offensive	472
He recrosses the Douro	473
Skirmish at Torrecilla de la Orden	473
The race of Marmont's and Wellington's armies	475
Wellington outstripped and outmanœuvred	477
Both armies cross the Tormes	479
The storm on the night of the 21st of July	480
Marmont decides to turn Wellington's right	481
Description of the field of the Arapiles	482
Marmont's preliminary manœuvres on the 22nd of July	483
Wellington's counter-dispositions	484
Misconstruction of Wellington's movements by Marmont	485
Marmont's false manœuvre	486

CONTENTS

xix

PAGE

Battle of Salamanca	487
Foy covers the retreat of the French	499
The pursuit on the 23rd of July : action of Garcia Hernandez	499
Review of Marmont's action	502
Casualties of the French	504
Casualties of the British	505
Review of Wellington's action	507
The work of the cavalry	511
The Principal Medical Officer mentioned in despatches	512
Also the Commissary-General	513

CHAPTER XVI

The United States declare war on Great Britain	514
Condition of Canada at this time	514
Regular troops in Canada in 1812	515
The war necessarily a maritime struggle	517
The chain of posts from Quebec westward along the lakes	517
The lines of attack for the Americans	520
American military preparations	521
The British commanders, Prevost and Brock	522
Troops provided by the Canadian Legislatures	523
Capture of Mackinac by the British	525
General Hull advances to Sandwich	525
Prevost's unwillingness to take the offensive	526
Mutiny among the Montreal Militia	527
The obnoxious Orders in Council repealed	528
Prevost negotiates an armistice with General Dearborn	528
Brock starts for Amherstburg	529
His meeting with Tecumseh	530
Surrender of General Hull	531
The Americans reject the armistice	533
Brock declines to evacuate Detroit	533
Captain Chauncey sent to form naval establishments on Lakes Erie and Ontario	534
Capture of the <i>Caledonia</i> by the Americans	536

	PAGE
The American force at Niagara	537
Its attack upon Queenstown	538
Death of Brock	540
Defeat of the Americans	542
Sheaffe's neglect to take advantage of the victory	543
Ignoble end of the American campaign on the Niagara frontier	544
Feeble campaign of Dearborn on Lake Champlain	545
General Harrison's operations on the Maumee	545
British victory at Brownstown	547
Success of the American frigates at sea	548

CHAPTER XVII

Clausel's retreat from Salamanca	550
Inactivity of Wellington's pursuit	551
The situation in consequence of his victory	552
The two courses open to him	553
General military situation of the French in Spain	554
Appearance of a British armament on the East Coast	554
Bentinck in Sicily: he sends seven thousand men under General Maitland to Mahon	555
Defeat of General O'Donnell at Castalla	556
Wellington marches on Madrid	557
Action at Las Rozas	558
Joseph evacuates Madrid	559
Wellington enters Madrid	560
Surrender of sundry French detachments	561
Clausel's march to relieve others	562
Wellington's movements in consequence	563
Merits of Clausel's retreat	564
Maitland disembarks at Alicante	565
Soult's unwillingness to evacuate Andalusia	566
Futility of his alternative plans	567
British and Spaniards enter Seville	570
Soult retires towards Murcia	571
Hill and Skerrett march to join Wellington	571

CONTENTS

xxi

PAGE

Description of Burgos	572
Investment of Burgos	573
The assault on the horn-work	574
Failure of the attempt to escalade the western front	575
First line of defence carried by mine and assault	579
Death of Colonel Somers-Cocks	580
Wellington's ammunition fails	581
Failure of another assault	582
Wellington raises the siege	583
The operations discreditable to him	583
His army overworked	586
Review of his position after Salamanca	587
His advance upon Madrid was a mistake	588
His chief object was to maintain the dispersion of the French armies	590
Wisdom after the event	591

CHAPTER XVIII

Junction of Soult's and Joseph's armies	592
They decide to march upon Madrid	592
Soult's delays on the way	593
Wellington's dispositions to protect Madrid	593
Ballesteros refuses to serve under him	594
Souham and Caffarelli march upon Burgos	595
Skirmish before Burgos	595
Wellington begins the retreat from Burgos	596
Souham begins the pursuit	597
The action on the Hormaza	598
Fine behaviour of the Hanoverians	599
Both armies paralysed by drunkenness on the Pisuerga	601
Souham forces the passage of the Pisuerga	602
Combat on the Carrion	603
Wellington realises that he is greatly outnumbered	603
Combats on the Douro	604
Wellington passes the Douro and halts	605

xxii	HISTORY OF THE ARMY	
		PAGE
Movements of Soult and Joseph		605
Hill's dispositions : combat on the Jarama		606
Hill retreats northward and westward		607
Wellington retires to San Cristobal		608
Junction of Hill and Wellington behind the Tormes		608
Junction of Joseph's and Souham's armies		608
Action before Alba de Tormes		609
Great numerical superiority of the French		609
Difficulties of the British Commissariat		610
Disloyalty and incapacity of Wellington's Chief Staff Officer		611
Dissensions of the French generals as to a plan of attack		612
The French cross the Tormes unopposed		613
Wellington takes up the position of the Arapiles		615
Soult's slowness and inactivity		615
Wellington draws off the British Army		616
Disorderly scenes on the retreat		617
General Paget taken prisoner		618
Rearguard action on the Huelva		618
Danger caused by the disobedience of Wellington's divisional commanders		620
The retreat ends at Ciudad Rodrigo		621
Injustice of Wellington's General Order rebuking the troops		621
Discipline of the troops none the less imperfect		622
General success of the campaign of 1812		623
Incompetence of Joseph and apathy of Soult		624
French disasters in the Peninsula due ultimately to Napoleon		625
APPENDIX I.—Wellington's Army at Salamanca : Strength		627
APPENDIX II.—Army of Portugal, 15th July and 1st August 1812		632
INDEX		637

ERRATA

Page 216, line 16 from top, *for* Badajos *read* Badajoz.
Pages 285, 288, 289, 290, 296, 297, 298, 299, *for* marginal date 1811 *read* 1812.
Page 391, line 10 from foot, *for* Christobal *read* Cristobal.
,, 417, line 19 from top, *for* Fuente Guinaldo *read* Fuenteguinaldo.
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BOOK XIV

CHAPTER I

THE Parliamentary session of 1810, after endless wrangles not only over the enquiry into the Walcheren expedition but also over a question of privilege which arose out of it, came to an end on the 21st of June. Though the Government had suffered more than one defeat, Perceval had on the whole passed triumphantly through his first trials as Prime Minister, and had greatly increased his parliamentary influence. None the less was he alive to the importance of strengthening his administration, and he strove accordingly to bring in Castlereagh and Canning. Wellesley and Liverpool, with rare self-denial, offered to make way for them ; and, when this offer had been negatived by the Cabinet, Yorke and Ryder proposed to sacrifice themselves in their stead. The negotiations, however, alike with Castlereagh, with Canning and with Lord Sidmouth, who was also approached by Perceval, ended abortively ; and by the end of September it was clear that the Government must stand or fall as it was. A few weeks later Princess Amelia, youngest and best-beloved daughter of George the Third, died of consumption ; Nov. 2. and the stroke of this sorrow threw the King into what proved to be incurable insanity. For a short time his condition fluctuated between better and worse ; but by the middle of December it was evident that a Regency must come ; and Perceval, following the precedent of Pitt in 1788, determined that the Regent's powers should be limited for a time by Act of Parliament. The Opposition, with which the Prince of

1810. Wales was closely allied, strove desperately to defeat the measure ; but Perceval by astonishing dexterity and courage contrived to carry it, and calmly awaited his dismissal by the incensed Regent. "By God, they shall not remain an hour," the Prince had said only a week before he assumed his new authority ; but a few days sufficed to change his mind. On the 4th of 1811. February he informed Perceval that he should retain his present advisers, lest the shock of a change of Ministers should impede his father's recovery.

Parliament was formally opened on the 12th of February by a speech from the Throne, which spoke highly of Wellington's services, and resolutely of the intention to prosecute operations in the Peninsula. The Opposition, by the mouths of Lord Grenville, Whitbread and others, of course declared continuance of the struggle in that quarter to be hopeless, though Grenville, at least, admitted the skill and prudence of the General ; but these criticisms carried no weight ; and, when on the 4th of March Palmerston brought forward the Army Estimates, Canning seized the occasion to make a vigorous and effective defence of the Government's military policy. Then arose the question of providing soldiers for the war, concerning which the Staff at the Horse Guards had been greatly exercised. "Nothing," to quote the words of one of them,¹ had been done to keep the "machine going" during the past session ; and ordinary recruiting would not suffice to make good even two-thirds of the casualties. Palmerston duly faced these facts ; and, after reckoning the average annual losses at twenty-two to twenty-three thousand men and the annual average of recruits enlisted at fifteen thousand, he brought in measures for turning over a fixed draft of about ten thousand every year from the Militia to the Army, and for replenishing the Militia by ordinary recruiting instead of by the ballot. Moreover, in deference to the representations of Wellington, the allowance hitherto

¹ Sir H. Torrens to Wellington, 3rd Jan. 1811. *Wellington MSS.*

made to the wives and families of Militiamen was discontinued in respect of all recruits raised after the passing of the Act, saving only in the case of ballotted men who accepted service as principals.

In the matter of men, therefore, all was safely assured for the future of the war ; in the matter of money it was not so. The last months of 1810 had brought with them an acute financial crisis, which was ascribed mainly to excessive and unsound speculation, but was ultimately due to the depreciation of the currency, which had been intensified by the Government's large purchases of gold for the war in Spain. The actual panic was brought about by the appearance of a report by a Committee of the House of Commons, which recommended the resumption of cash-payments within two years. This recommendation was rejected by the Commons ; and the failure of a large number of merchants was averted by a grant of six millions of Exchequer bills for their relief. But the whole question was raised anew in June 1811 through a notice circulated by a landlord, Lord King, to his tenants, to the effect that he would no longer receive bank-notes at their nominal value in payment of rent, but would demand gold or paper estimated by the price of gold. Lord King disclaimed all motives for his action except those of justice and patriotism ; but it was pointed out in debate that bank-notes had from the first been accepted at their face-value solely from patriotic feeling. Pitt, according to Perceval, had even in 1797 considered the expediency of making such acceptance compulsory, and had abstained from doing so upon the assurance of the merchants that such a measure was unnecessary. When, however, men of rank, wealth, and character rejected bank-notes and demanded gold, the only alternative was to make bank-notes legal tender, which was accordingly done by Act of Parliament in July. Thus was England finally committed to a forced paper-currency ; and the fact furnished a significant comment upon Wellington's complaints

1811. against Ministers for failing to supply him with specie.

To turn now to the great enemy, Napoleon appears to have thought in 1810 that his work of subduing Europe was nearly done ; and indeed the year 1811 was the quietest that he spent during the whole of his reign as Consul or Emperor. France, being no extreme sufferer from the Continental Blockade, was fairly tranquil and contented ; and even the subject states might with proper management have become so likewise. Napoleon's administration in many countries, most notably in Italy and Western Germany, was a great improvement upon that of the former rulers ; and, but for the incessant exactions of men and money, his government might very well have gained popularity. But it never occurred to Napoleon to win the hearts of the people whom he had subjugated. To him they were instruments not children, tributaries not subjects, for his whole Empire was little more to him than an organised coalition for the overthrow of England. Hence, even where his rule was welcomed, it generated no enthusiasm, while in all other countries there was eager longing for the day of deliverance. Holland could never be patient of a foreign yoke ; Belgium and the Western Provinces of the Rhine resented the levying of money and men for French objects ; all districts abutting on the North Sea and the Baltic groaned under the scourge of the Blockade. Moreover, even where Napoleon's sway had been most beneficent, the abolition of feudal dues and the construction of good roads had brought people together, and had inspired both Germans and Italians with the ideal of a new life as united nations. In a word the component parts of his Empire had had enough of his schooling, and yearned for independence.

The Emperor, however, was aware of none of these tendencies, except in so far as they revealed themselves through the conduct of his lieutenants ; and then he interpreted them simply as examples of individual

perversity. Murat in Naples, Joseph in Spain, and Louis in Holland held views of their kingship which differed widely from those of their lord paramount, each one of them being eager, though not quite in the same fashion, to be an actual and sovereign ruler. How Napoleon treated Joseph we have already in some measure seen. In 1810, after endless quarrels with his brother Louis, he harassed him into July 1. abdication of the throne of Holland, and annexed that country to France. Murat, so far, had dissembled his intentions, which were none the less to be manifested in due time. Jerome, King of Westphalia, more cunning than Louis, served his great brother in the matter of exactions in order the better to indulge his own passion for luxury and display, and thereby brought loathing upon the Imperial rule. Even Eugène Beauharnais, viceroy in Upper Italy and the most loyal of Napoleon's lieutenants, required an occasional reminder from the Emperor that Italy was a secondary matter, and that France must come first of all.¹

As regards the neighbours of the French Empire, Austria was considered by Napoleon to be safely attached to him through his marriage with the Archduchess Marie Louise; and he did not realise the rapid growth of Prussia into a dangerous enemy. This latter country had reformed herself from within, and re-organised her resources through the inspiration of her national genius; thereby stimulating the rise of new ideas and new ambitions essentially German, which were vehemently hostile to France from the very first, and were destined two generations later to be fatal to her. Such were the fruits of the Emperor's policy towards Prussia, which he had conceived and intended to be one of practical annihilation. In Sweden likewise he had made a fatal mistake. Gustavus the Fourth had been dethroned in favour of his childless uncle, the Duke

¹ "Mon principe est; la France avant tout," Napoleon to Eugène, 23rd August 1810, *Corres. de Napoléon*, 16,824.

1811. of Sudermania, who ascended the throne as Charles the Thirteenth, with the Prince of Augustenburg as his heir-presumptive. This latter died on the 18th of May 1810, when the Swedes asked for Bernadotte to succeed him, as one who was a Marshal of France and connected by marriage with the Imperial family.¹ Napoleon did not love arrangements that were not of his own suggestion, and offered the crown of Sweden to Eugène ; but upon his stepson's refusal he allowed Bernadotte to accept it, thereby establishing in power a man who had always been jealous of him, and who could now claim the right to independent action as the elect of the Swedish people. Vain, pushing, and ambitious, wooing popularity as the breath of his nostrils and hungry for great station, Bernadotte, on taking over the government early in 1811, was in no hurry to incur odium with his new subjects by enforcing the Continental System. For the moment he could not avert a declaration of war by Sweden against England ; but such a declaration could always be reduced to a matter of form ; and, if he decided to cut himself free from the French alliance, he could safely fall back on the support of Russia.

For Russia by this time had been converted from the friend into the enemy of France. Alexander had gained all that he immediately sought from the French alliance ; and the Continental System was now causing such industrial and financial distress in his dominions as to make the burden intolerable. For a time this grievance might have been borne, if the French operations in the Peninsula had been successful in closing the whole of European ports to England ; but so far they had completely failed. The British were still holding their own in Portugal ; the Spanish insurrection was still vigorously alive and, since the development of guerilla warfare on a large scale, was for military purposes more formidable than ever. Napoleon, living

¹ He had married Désirée Clary, whom Napoleon himself had once wished to espouse, sister of Joseph Bonaparte's wife.

increasingly in a land of dreams, amused himself in 1811. September 1810 by projecting an invasion of the Channel Islands with ninety thousand men ; and on the 3rd of November he gave orders as to what should be done in Portugal after the embarkation of the British.¹ But he continually impressed on the Tsar that the question of war or peace between France and Russia lay with him to decide. Let his Imperial brother but enforce the Continental System rigidly, and in another year or less England would be forced to come to terms.² She was already in distress, he declared, and not untruly, looking to the financial crisis of 1810 ; bankruptcies were multiplying ; exchange was twenty-five per cent against her ; and her banks and her manufacturers were in despair. Napoleon did not reflect that Russian men of business were suffering even more than the British.

At the same time he did not conceal from himself that the Tsar was showing signs of ill-will. French produce had been excluded from Russia's latest acquisitions, the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia ; and Napoleon actually sounded Austria as to her inclination to wrest these provinces from Russia by force of arms. By the end of February 1811 he had reached the length of writing to the Tsar that Alexander's friendship for him had come to an end, and that the alliance of Tilsit was known in Europe to be a thing of the past. A fortnight later he instructed his ambassador at St. Petersburg to represent that he sought no kind of quarrel with Russia, but would be compelled to make war upon her if she came to an understanding with England ; and a few days after this again, upon the pretext that the English were making preparations for a great movement in the Baltic, he increased the garrison of Dantzig to twelve thousand men. At the same time he began to reinforce heavily Davoust's army in Germany, and to take other pre-

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 16,916, 17,097.

² *Ibid.* 17,071, 17,099.

1811. liminary steps towards a Russian campaign. He explained that he did not desire to fight Russia, but only to take up an offensive position, while he could still do so without provoking hostilities. To all intent he was already resolved to aim at the Tsar the great stroke, which in the following year brought about his own ruin.¹

"Next year's conscription will be added to this year's as soon as January comes," he wrote to Davoust on the 24th of March : "this will cost me much money and will show you the importance of procuring for me as much, and demanding from me as little, as possible." The phrase was characteristic of Napoleon. No man was ever more frugal of money or more lavish of men. Between September 1805 and April 1807 he had called up from France alone four hundred and twenty thousand men ; and the age of conscripts at the moment of incorporation fell from twenty and a quarter in 1804 to eighteen and a half in 1807. In March 1808 he summoned eighty thousand more recruits, in September 1808 one hundred and sixty thousand, in January 1809 eighty thousand, in April thirty thousand, and in September thirty-six thousand, making altogether over eight hundred thousand recruits drawn from France alone in less than five years.

By 1810 he had so far anticipated the conscription of that year that it could give him nothing ; but he contrived to raise forty thousand boys, from sixteen to nineteen years of age, drawing them in advance from the lists of 1812, 1813, and 1814. Finally in January 1811 he called up one hundred and twenty thousand men, about one-fourth of them from Italy and Holland, and the remainder from France ; so that it seems to be actually true that in less than six years he took from France close upon nine hundred thousand men. In addition to these he had of course foreign mercenaries and auxiliary troops of all nations, Polish, German,

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 17,187, 17,388, 17,395, 17,453, 17,492, 17,514, 17,515-16.

Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, to the number of two 1811. or three hundred thousand ; but he could not really trust any except the French, and he was rapidly coming to the end of them. Already their quality had deteriorated greatly, while the mortality, owing to the youth of the recruits, was appalling. Moreover, in spite of many effusive orders and utterances, Napoleon took no care of his soldiers. He did not pay them ; he did not feed them ; he did not clothe them ; he made no sufficient provision for the sick and wounded ; and his hospitals and medical service were a disgrace to his name. The inevitable result was that his losses in men were gigantic, and by 1811 this was beginning to tell seriously against him. "Refractoriness," to use the technical term, self-mutilation, and desertion among conscripts already prevailed to a dangerous extent, and were not to be checked by the most merciless severity. It is too often forgotten by the panegyrists of Napoleon that he was the most wasteful of commanders, and that a long war was consequently to him a fatal war. It is commonly said that he was overthrown by the campaigns in Russia and Spain. This is but half of the truth. It was Russia's refusal to make peace after Austerlitz which marked the beginning of his downfall, for his army never recovered from the losses of the Polish campaign.

Such was the condition of Napoleon and of his armed forces at the end of 1810. For the Peninsular campaign of that year, it will be remembered, he had hoped to bring troops from Andalusia and even from Aragon to bear upon the British army from the east, while Massena descended upon it from the north. These combinations had failed completely, and the final situation towards the close of the year had been as follows : Suchet with the Third Corps, or Army of Aragon, was awaiting the return of Macdonald and the Seventh Corps from Gerona in order to besiege Tortosa ; Sebastiani with the Fourth Corps was kept fully occupied by insurgents in Murcia and Valencia ; Victor and the

1811. First Corps were tied down to the siege of Cadiz ; Massena with the Second, Sixth, and Eighth Corps lay opposite to Wellington at Santarem, unable to move forward and unwilling to move back ; and the Fifth Corps under Mortier, though nominally free for work in any quarter, was subject to constant distraction of a part of its strength by the raids of Ballesteros and of insurgent bands on the western side of Cadiz. Over and above these troops there were the garrisons of the northern provinces and, as a mobile force, two divisions of the Young Guard, which had been moved into Old Castile, besides General Serra's division on the borders of Leon and Galicia. Lastly there was the so-called Army of the Centre, the twenty thousand men which constituted the sole force under King Joseph's own command, and which were none too many for the task of holding Madrid and New Castile in subjection.

Napoleon's intelligence as to the progress of events in the Peninsula was very imperfect and much belated, owing to the interception of French messengers by the Spanish guerilla bands ; and it frequently happened that the earliest information of his own troops came to him from the English newspapers. Moreover, even when the letters of his Generals did come to his hand, they so habitually reported smooth things in preference to the truth that they can have been of little service to him. It is not quite clear why he did not himself pay a visit to the Peninsula in 1811, except that, as he said, he would require six months to do what was necessary in Portugal, and that there was no reckoning what might happen in Europe if he buried himself in so remote a corner for half a year. He was, it is true, active in his military preparations in Eastern Europe, though these might well have been deferred until affairs in Spain had been set upon a sounder footing. Since, however, he could not go to the Peninsula in person, it must have been abundantly evident that some other Commander-in-Chief upon the spot was needed above all things, for the duties of such a chief could not be

fulfilled by any man, no matter how great his genius, 1811. at a distance of several hundred miles from the theatre of war. Nevertheless with suicidal infatuation Napoleon persisted in dictating from Paris the movements of his armies ; his jealous and suspicious temperament forbidding him to entrust to any subject the command of from three to four hundred thousand men. In fact the business of his Empire had grown with the extension of its limits until it exceeded the grasp even of his swift and comprehensive mind. He had indeed attempted to delegate power and authority, but without an idea of abandoning his own rights of supreme command in every department. If a vice-gerent's behaviour were not to his mind, Napoleon's only remedy was to annex that vice-gerent's province to France and to take it under his direct administration.

Such, as we have seen, had been his treatment of Holland, and such was the manner in which he proposed to deal with Spain. Poor Joseph's complaints of the disobedience of Napoleon's generals to him, the nominal King, and his representation of the disastrous results of that disobedience quickened Napoleon to no change of policy ; he simply proposed to hand Portugal over to his brother, as soon as Massena should have conquered it, and to annex all Spain north of the Ebro to France. Joseph protested frantically, but could obtain no concession except on condition that the Cortes should recognise him as lawful King of Spain and submit to be ruled according to the Constitution of Bayonne. If this were done, then Napoleon agreed to leave Spain alone, and even to guarantee her integrity ; but, as there was no chance whatever that the Cortes would listen to Joseph's overtures for a moment, and as Napoleon even to this condition added the further proviso that the British should first have re-embarked from Lisbon, Joseph's prospects of reigning over an united kingdom could not be said to have improved.¹

In deep vexation the unhappy man declared his

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 17, 111.

1811. intention of abdicating his throne and living a quiet life in France; to which his imperial brother replied that, if he deserted his post without leave, he should be arrested directly he had crossed the French frontier. So matters remained until April, when Joseph seized the opportunity offered by the christening of Napoleon's son, the King of Rome, to rush to Paris and to perform his duties as godfather in person. Napoleon, though not too well pleased, put a good face on the matter; and after many conversations he agreed to make Joseph a monthly allowance from the French Treasury, to pay over to him one-quarter of the gross revenues collected over a large part of Spain, and to give him supreme control of the law-courts. But supreme direction of all the military forces in the Peninsula Napoleon would not concede to him. He yielded so far as to ordain that all officers commanding armies should report their proceedings to Joseph, and should undertake no operations without informing him, but beyond this the Emperor would not go. Joseph obtained permission for Jourdan to be sent back to him as chief of his staff, in the hope that the generals in the Peninsula would more readily obey orders issued through a Marshal; but his expectations were not fulfilled. Napoleon did not disguise from himself that the chief command ought, as he said, to be one and indivisible; but, he significantly added, a Marshal who took all the responsibility would want to take all the glory also, and therefore he had no intention of altering existing arrangements.¹

The central defect of the French armies in Spain remained therefore unremedied, though some effort was made to reduce the number of independent commanders. In January 1811 the Emperor swept away the six military governments, which he had set up a few months before in the north of Spain, and put the whole of the troops in Navarre, Biscay, Burgos, Valladolid, Salamanca, Asturias, and Santander, about

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 17,752.

seventy thousand men in all, under the command of 1811. Marshal Bessières, Duke of Istria. The Marshal's instructions bade him suppress brigandage, support the army of Portugal against the English, and watch the Spanish regular forces in Galicia and Asturias, for which duties, as Bessières most justly protested, he had not nearly enough troops. He therefore recommended that the French sphere of operations should be contracted, and the French forces concentrated in the north, so as to put down the guerilla-bands in earnest. But so wholesale a change in Napoleon's methods would have been set down as a confession of failure ; and it need hardly be said that the Emperor would not hear of such a thing. He did indeed give Bessières in June two new divisions of infantry—about thirteen thousand men—which rather more than made good the number of his sick in hospital ; but he would agree to no change in his previous orders. Thus doomed to a hopeless task, Bessières sought to facilitate it by carrying out his plans of concentration, at any rate within the limits of his own command ; namely by withdrawing Bonnet's division from Oviedo and from the maritime towns which it occupied on the coast, and by keeping his troops altogether on the south side of the Asturian mountains. But here again Napoleon intervened, condemning the project as detestable because it would allow insurrection in Asturias and Galicia to reorganise itself unchecked. It may be added that, owing to complaints from Joseph, Bessières was recalled from his command of the Army of the North less than six weeks after he had received it.

There was yet another quarter where Napoleon presently substituted, for all practical purposes, a single for a dual command. It will be remembered that ever since August 1810 preparations had been going forward for the siege of Tortosa, but that the operation itself had been delayed by Henry O'Donnell's brilliant raid in North Catalonia. By December Marshal Macdonald 1810. was at last free to cover the siege, and took up his

1810. position at Mora, twenty-five miles north of Tortosa, Dec. 16. while on the 16th General Suchet's army came before the city. Tortosa was a strong fortress with a sufficient garrison ; but the attack was resolute and well arranged, whereas the defence was unskilful and half-hearted ; 1811. and on the 2nd of January 1811 the place fell into Jan. 2. Suchet's hands. Marshal Macdonald thereupon set his troops in motion for Lerida, taking the road by way of Reus, Tarragona, and Valls, a little beyond which last place his leading brigade ran straight into an ambuscade, and was not extricated without a loss of five or six hundred men. The Spanish General, Campoverde, tried to follow up his good fortune by an attack upon Barcelona in concert with the Spanish party within the walls ; but the project was betrayed, and the attempt was foiled with considerable loss to the assailants. Suchet at the same time took advantage of the number of troops released for work in the field by the fall of Tortosa to harry the guerilla-bands of Aragon. He inflicted some loss upon them, but was fain to confess that, no matter how often these partisans were defeated, they were never dispersed and never discouraged, but returned, in defiance of all chastisement, to surround instantly any French force that might venture into the plains.

Napoleon was so much pleased with Suchet's success that he ordered a special letter of commendation to be written to him, and transferred nearly half of Macdonald's corps to his command, thus raising the Seventh Corps at the expense of the Third from twenty-six thousand to forty-three thousand men. He then bade Suchet proceed to the siege of Tarragona, assuring him that he would find his Marshal's baton within the walls, and left to Macdonald the minor work of securing the smaller strongholds of the insurgents in Upper Catalonia, and in particular of Montserrat. Macdonald accordingly left Lerida for Barcelona with an escort of over seven thousand men, and, having lost about one-tenth of these from constant attacks during the march, sent

them back to join Suchet at Zaragoza. That general 1811. then made his dispositions for securing Aragon in his rear and for foiling any raid from Valencia on his flank, which left him about twenty thousand men for his work at Tarragona.

Before his preparations were complete there came the astounding news that Figueras had been recaptured by the Spaniards—Figueras the first fortress on the south of the Eastern Pyrenees, which commanded the road from Perpignan, and had been treacherously occupied by the French in 1809. One of the younger chiefs of the Migueletes, noticing that the French garrison was slack and careless, had conspired with three young Catalans within the walls to admit a storming party by false keys into the stronghold ; and the garrison on the night of the 9th of April had been April 9. overpowered before it could even attempt resistance. Thereby not only did large quantities of supplies and stores, which the French could ill afford to lose, fall into the hands of the captors, but the communications between Barcelona and Perpignan were directly beset. Macdonald appealed to Suchet to abandon the enterprise against Tarragona for the present and to march to his aid with every man that he could spare. Suchet refused, on the ground that it would take him the best part of a month to send a division from Lerida up to Figueras, whereas the French frontier lay within twenty miles of the captured fortress, so that help could much more readily be obtained from the north. Moreover, as he truly urged, there could be no better way of drawing the Spanish field-force away from the north than by laying siege to Tarragona ; and accordingly he started on his march to that city on the 28th of April 28. April.

Meanwhile on the 17th General Baraguay d'Hilliers at Gerona had managed to collect over six thousand troops for the blockade of Figueras, a force which should hardly have been able to resist Campoverde, who had already superior numbers of his own, besides the

1811. two thousand men of the garrison to help him. Campo-verde, however, was a slow mover and a bad tactician. He made an effort to break the blockade on the May. 3rd of May, failed, and then, hearing of Suchet's movements, hurried by sea to Tarragona. Napoleon during this interval collected about fourteen thousand men from Southern France at Perpignan;¹ and in May these crossed the frontier and under Macdonald's personal command began the siege of Figueras in earnest. But though the bulk of the Seventh Corps was thus occupied with the recapture of this petty fortress, the Third Corps under Suchet had not been diverted from its appointed task ; and altogether it may be said that the French star was not on the descendant in the east of the Peninsula.

1810. Returning now to the French forces with which we have been most immediately concerned, it will be recalled that Massena had sent General Foy to Napoleon to lay before him the state of affairs in Portugal. The General was received by the Emperor on the 24th of November 1810, and after some conversation obtained his consent to Massena's main propositions, namely that the Fifth Corps should be pushed into Alemtejo, and the Ninth Corps under General Drouet brought forward to Ponte da Murcella, in order to relieve the Army of Portugal of all its difficulties. Napoleon, indeed, had so far anticipated Massena's suggestions as to have written on the 14th of November a strong letter of blame to Soult for neglecting to pursue Romana with the Fifth Corps, and thus to threaten the British on both banks of the Tagus ; and he had added to this censure the perfectly false intelligence that there had never been more than three British regiments at Cadiz, and that these had since been withdrawn to Lisbon. He now, on the 4th of December, speeded positive orders to the Duke of Dalmatia to take ten thousand men from Andalusia, advance with them either upon Montalvaõ or Villa

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 17,644.

Velha, and open communications with Massena, so as to 1810.
force the British to re-embark.¹

The original of this despatch was intercepted and brought to Wellington, but the duplicate reached Soult safely and found him already preparing to move, for Joseph had before this instructed him to march upon Badajoz. On the 22nd of December General Dec. 22. Graham within the walls of Cadiz learned that a considerable force had been withdrawn from before the city towards Seville. The news was confirmed in the course of the next few days, a Spanish intelligencer averring that five thousand men of Victor's corps had been detached, and that only seven thousand remained. Wellington likewise received early advice of the movement, and divined its purport at once, not without misgiving, for it was by no means to his taste that Soult should advance against him in Portugal without raising the siege of Cadiz. He at once represented to the Portuguese Government the necessity for revictualling Abrantes, and for withdrawing all valuable property and supplies from Alemtejo; and in a memorandum of the 20th of January 1811 he urged upon the Spaniards that the Army of Estremadura under General Mendizabal at Llerena should hold the line of the Guadiana for as long as possible, and should at all events break down the bridges of Merida and Medellin.²

Meanwhile Soult, very reluctantly relinquishing the command at Cadiz which he had only taken over in October, had marched on the 21st of December with Latour Maubourg's division of dragoons and five thousand infantry of the First Corps for Seville. There he busied himself with the preparation of a siege-train and of transport for the beleaguering of Badajoz; for he had made up his mind that an advance

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 17, 131. Berthier to Soult, 4th Dec. 1811, printed in *Wellington Despatches*, iv. 820.

² *Wellington Desp.* To C. Stuart, 1st, 8th Jan.; to Liverpool, 5th Jan.; to Beresford, 11th Jan. 1811.

1810. with ten thousand men to the Lower Tagus, such as Napoleon had ordered, was too dangerous a venture to be thought of, whereas solid operations with a larger force might not only make a diversion in Massena's favour, but accomplish lasting results in Estremadura.¹ Accordingly, having called up additional cavalry from Dec. 30. Victor's corps, he marched from Seville on the 30th of December with an army of four thousand horse, nearly fourteen thousand foot and two thousand artillery. To take the field even with so small a number he had been obliged to weaken very seriously the garrisons of Xeres and Seville, as well as the troops employed in the siege of Cadiz, and he had therefore taken great pains to conceal his proceedings at Seville. It was not until a week after Soult's departure that Wellington's intelligencers were able to furnish him with correct details of the Marshal's force and supply-train, together with information that his reputed object was the siege of Badajoz.²

Advancing northward in two parallel columns of about equal strength, Soult speedily realised how wise had been his determination to disobey Napoleon's orders, and to march with twenty thousand instead of ten thousand men. The eastern column, consisting of Girard's division of the Fifth Corps and cavalry of the First Corps, came at Usagre upon two or three thousand Spanish and Portuguese cavalry, which were covering the retreat of Mendizabal's six thousand Spanish infantry to Badajoz. The western column, composed of cavalry and Gazan's division of the Fifth Corps, having the siege-train under convoy, made but slow progress, and on reaching Monesterio discovered that the division of Ballesteros was lying close upon its left flank. Ballesteros, as a matter of fact, pursuant to orders given to him before knowledge of Soult's march, was on his way to the Condado de Niebla, in order to threaten Seville; but Soult, on

¹ Soult to Berthier, 1st, 24th Jan. 1811; in Belmas, i. 460, 470.

² Wellington MSS. Col. Austin to Wellington, 4th, 8th Jan. 1811.

learning of his whereabouts, was naturally unwilling 1810. to leave so dangerous an enemy on the French flank, and detached Gazan's division to hold him in check. After a little unsuccessful manœuvring Gazan decided 1811. that the only way to be quit of Ballesteros was to hunt Jan. him down ; and accordingly, after separating a small force to escort the convoy, he plunged with the bulk of his troops into the mountains in pursuit of the Spaniard. But Ballesteros was not easily to be caught ; and he led the French General a weary chase of three weeks before he at last turned to bay on the 24th of Jan. 24. January at Villanueva de los Castillejos, hard by the south-eastern border of Portugal. In the action that followed the Spaniards were beaten but not destroyed ; and Gazan was fain to hurry northward by toilsome marches to rejoin his chief, having harassed his troops considerably to no purpose whatever.

Soult meanwhile, being deprived of half of his infantry, and finding that his siege-train was still retarded in the passes about Monesterio, judged himself too weak to besiege Badajoz, and resolved instead to attack the feeble fortress of Olivenza, about fourteen miles south of it. First, therefore, he sent cavalry over the Guadiana by the bridge of Merida, which had not been destroyed as Wellington had recommended, and ascertained that Mendizabal had retired to Alburquerque, twenty miles north of Badajoz. Thereupon he posted Latour Maubourg's division of dragoons in observation of that fortress, and on the 11th of January came before Olivenza. The place Jan. 11. had been dismantled, and was neither defensible nor worth defending ; but none the less Mendizabal had thrown nearly half of his six thousand bayonets into it under command of an old and infirm Swiss officer, General Herck. Ten days passed before Soult's siege-guns could be brought up ; but on the 22nd fire was Jan. 22. opened from the French batteries ; and therewith Herck at once hoisted the white flag, and presently surrendered the place, with its garrison of over four

1811. thousand men, to the six thousand infantry of Girard's division. He had made no attempt at resistance and altogether had behaved disgracefully.

On the very day of Olivenza's fall Soult received letters from Paris repeating Napoleon's former orders that he should make a diversion in favour of Massena. This placed him in an awkward position. It was necessary for him to leave one battalion in Olivenza and to detach two more to escort his prisoners to Seville, which left him with barely five thousand infantry to complete his campaign, Gazan's division having so far shown no sign of return. However, sooner than brave the Emperor's displeasure, he decided to invest

Jan. 26. Badajoz at once ; and on the 26th he marched with his infantry and artillery upon its southern face, sending Latour Maubourg with six regiments of cavalry across the Guadiana—for the bridge of Merida was still intact—to enclose it on the north. The place, which shall in due time be described in detail, was a fortress of the first class with an adequate garrison of five thousand men under a brave and capable leader, General Rafael Menacho. The French broke ground on the night of

Jan. 30. the 30th, whereupon Menacho at once made a bold
Feb. 3. sortie. On the 3rd of February he made a second sally which promised high success, when to his extreme ill-fortune Gazan's division came up unexpectedly in the nick of time to repel it. Much rejoiced by the recovery of the rest of his infantry, Soult bent himself to the siege in earnest.

Upon the first news of the Marshal's advance to Merida, Wellington had concluded that his object was the invasion of Alemtejo, and had given his orders to Beresford accordingly.¹ A couple of days, however, sufficed to undeceive him, and to draw from him extremely sharp criticism of Mendizabal's proceedings.²

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Beresford, 12th, 13th, 15th Jan. 1811.

² "No arrangement was ever more completely Spanish than to have sent between three and four thousand of their best men into Olivenza, a place without artillery, ammunition, or provisions, under

That officer, as is common with generals of all nations 1811. who have blundered into a difficult position, was now crying out for all the forces of the kingdom to be despatched to extricate him ; and accordingly Romana sent him first the brigade of Don Carlos d'Espana from before Abrantes, and a few days later six thousand Spanish troops from the lines of Torres Vedras. The Marquis had made up his mind to take command of the entire Spanish force in person ; and Wellington had on the 20th of January drawn up for him a memorandum of advice as to the operations that should be undertaken. On that same day, however, Romana fell so ill that he was unable to travel, and on the 23rd he died suddenly of disease of the heart. The Marquis, though his military talent was small, was none the less, as Wellington testified, the brightest ornament in the Spanish Army, the most upright patriot in the country and the most strenuous defender of the cause of Spain. It was pure zeal for his fatherland which had inspired him to work heartily and unselfishly with the British, and had earned for him Wellington's sincere admiration and attachment. "Under existing circumstances," wrote the British General, "his loss is the greatest which the cause could sustain, and I don't know how we are to replace him."¹

For the moment the whole of the Spanish officers, who would have been under Romana's command, referred themselves for orders to Wellington ; and he answered them in the terms of his memorandum of the 20th, which he had already communicated to Mendizabal. Thus it was that on the 29th there was united at Elvas Jan. 29. a solid body of eleven thousand foot and three thousand horse, of which Mendizabal took command ; and on the

circumstances in which it was impossible, if they were attacked, that they should be relieved. Then, as usual, they halloo to the whole world for assistance." *Wellington Desp.* To H. Wellesley, 20th Jan. 1811.

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To C. Stuart, 23rd Jan. ; to Liverpool, 26th Jan. 1811.

1811. night of the 5th of February this force encamped on the heights of San Cristobal, in actual touch with the out-works of Badajoz. Wellington had advised that the Spaniards should entrench themselves along the line of these heights from Campo Maior to Badajoz ; but Mendizabal preferred to throw a large portion of his infantry into the fortress, and from thence to make a sally against the besiegers. He made his sortie accordingly on the 7th with five thousand men. His troops behaved admirably, but being matched, quite unnecessarily, against superior instead of inferior numbers, were repulsed with heavy loss. After this failure Mendizabal withdrew part of his infantry from Badajoz and again encamped on the heights of San Cristobal with about nine thousand foot and three thousand horse, making no attempt to entrench himself, and neglecting the most elementary precautions against surprise. These blunders were not lost upon Soult, who at dawn of the 19th assailed his front with some five thousand infantry, having already sent his cavalry to turn the Spanish flank. The Spanish horse ran away at once, but the infantry fought stoutly until the French cavalry came into sight, when they also broke and fled. Fully half of the Spanish foot were killed or taken, the remainder escaping into Badajoz itself or over the Portuguese frontier. By this action, known as the battle of Gebora, the Spanish army of Estremadura was shattered at a blow, and Soult could pursue the siege of the fortress at his leisure.

"The Spaniards," wrote Wellington on the 10th of February, "have done exactly what I recommended them not to do, and have omitted that which I recommended them to do ; and that has happened which I foretold. If the French have two or three thousand infantry on the right of the Guadiana to support the cavalry, the Army of the Left and Badajoz will both be lost." His prediction had been in part already verified ; yet he confessed that the misfortune was unexpected and was the greatest that had be-

fallen the British since the battle of Ocaña. He had 1811. from the first resolved, as soon as reinforcements should reach him, to send a body of troops to help the Spaniards to drive Soult from Badajoz ; but it was now a question whether he could spare a detachment powerful enough to do the work alone. For the present he could only entreat Mendizabal to urge the garrison to resist to the very last, holding out hopes that he might yet be able to come to its relief.¹

The situation in Estremadura came as the climax of many trials which had beset Wellington during the winter. In the first place nearly the whole of his generals wished to go home on leave. Some of them, such as Hill, Fane, and Leith, were suffering from ill-health which really made them unfit for duty ; but others, such as Craufurd, Cotton, Charles Stewart and Anson, pleaded private affairs which needed settlement, simply because they desired a little relaxation in the bosom of their families. As Wellington put it, he had no sooner trained generals to know their business than they went away, leaving him to begin the whole of the work again with new men. To refuse leave to general officers was, in the judgment both of himself and of the staff at head-quarters, impossible ; but his manner of granting it, when he thought it undeserved, was certainly not encouraging ; and he had an excellent ally at the Horse Guards in the person of Torrens, the Military Secretary, who not only pledged himself "to hunt off the absentees" to the Peninsula, but gave all officers to understand at their departure from England that they must not expect leave of absence. Meanwhile Torrens confessed that he found enormous difficulty in finding competent generals. Among Wellington's older friends, Acland was still disabled by sickness ; among those who had afterwards joined him, Lord Dalhousie's private affairs were in such a state as to forbid him to leave England on penalty of ruin ; while

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Beresford, 10th Feb. ; to H. Wellesley, 23rd Feb. ; to Mendizabal, 23rd Feb., 2nd March 1811.

1811. Sir Henry Clinton, for some personal reason, was held to be hopelessly unacceptable to Wellington. However, Torrens succeeded in securing Generals Long, whom he described as "active, able, and intelligent," Burne, Alten, Houston, Howard, and Hoghton, though many of these officers did not reach Lisbon until March.¹

Another matter over which Wellington worried himself greatly, and perhaps unwarrantably, was that of reinforcements. As we have already seen, the British Government had given the General all and more than all the force for which he had originally asked; but still he continued to press for an increase with many private expressions of discontent. Torrens seconded his application most loyally, and Liverpool on the 17th of January informed Wellington that, over and above the drafts which had been pouring into Lisbon throughout the winter, a separate reinforcement of seven battalions² should be despatched at once, and one if not two regiments of cavalry held ready to embark also. Unfortunately these troops were long detained by foul winds; and Wellington, in his general suspicion of the Government's lukewarmness towards him, was inclined to charge this misfortune to the account of Ministers. The dearth of coined money, again, was an evil which never ceased to weigh upon him; and his temper was not improved when towards the end of December a long-awaited ship with specie brought only a million and a half instead of five millions of dollars.³ Strangely enough he could not realise that the Government was in as desperate straits as himself; and he therefore set down their shortcomings to a deliberate desire to withdraw the troops from

¹ *Wellington MSS.* To Wellington from W. Stewart, 1st Dec.; from Craufurd, 8th, 17th Dec.; from Leith, 21st Dec.; from Fane and Cotton, 22nd Dec. 1810; from Torrens, 18th, 21st Jan., 12th, 13th Feb. 1811.

² 2nd, 1/36th, 51st; 2/52nd; 85th; 1st and 2nd Light Batts., K.G.L.

³ *Wellington MSS.* H. Wellesley to Wellington, 23rd Dec. 1810.

Portugal and make an end of the Peninsular War. "I 1811. think," he wrote to his brother William on the 11th of January, "that you are mistaken in your conjecture as to the confidence placed in me by the Cabinet and their desire to reinforce the army. I cannot say what the sentiments and objects of the Cabinet are; but I think I can prove from the letters and conduct of the Minister for the War Department that his sentiments and objects are entirely different from those which you suppose. He has long been dabbling in a game separate from that to be played in this country ever since he came into office; and he has never acted with me upon any broad or liberal system of confidence."¹

Then again the internal condition of Portugal never ceased to give Wellington great and legitimate anxiety. Though England might pay and clothe the Portuguese Army, she could not also feed it; and the Portuguese Commissariat, in like case with every other branch of Portuguese administration, was hopelessly inefficient. Where food had been provided, transport for its distribution was wanting; and where transport was obtainable, food was not forthcoming. The result was that many Portuguese soldiers died and many more deserted, at a time when every possible man was needed in the fighting line. Wellington denounced the evil strenuously, and pointed out truly enough that it was but part and parcel of an administrative system which was rotten to the core; but none the less he seems to have assumed that with true goodwill it might have been speedily abolished. Herein, no doubt, he erred. It was too much to expect of the indolent Portuguese temperament that it should suddenly reorganise a nation and its resources upon a strict northern and Teutonic basis. We are apt to forget that other people are as fondly attached to their faults and follies as we are to our own, and that they are not disposed to change them at a moment's notice to satisfy impatient strangers. Those who have been nourished upon

¹ *Wellington MSS.* To W. Wellesley Pole, 11th Jan. 1811.

1811. corruption part with it very reluctantly ; and, though the taste for it may be stigmatised as depraved, yet, as we have reason to know, there is none to which human nature so readily returns, even though it may have been for a time forsaken.

To Wellington, a man of transcendent common-sense, official helplessness, timidity, and mismanagement meant little short of treachery ; and it is undoubtedly true that there was still a small party friendly to the French in Portugal, which supplied information to them, and occasionally furnished a few deserters to their army. But Wellington thought he saw ill-faith also in the factious obstruction of his old opponents the Bishop of Oporto and the Principal Sousa, both of them, it will be remembered, members of the Regency. It so happened that towards the end of December 1810 these high functionaries were simultaneously taken ill, to the great satisfaction of Mr. Stuart, who, in their absence, for the first time found it possible to conduct business without difficulty or opposition. Unfortunately both made a good recovery within three weeks, and returned to the council chamber with strength refreshed and spirits renewed to throw every conceivable obstacle in the way of Wellington's measures. Stuart was in despair. "Their removal is indispensable to the salvation of the country," he wrote, not for the first time, on the 19th of January ; and Wellington was very much of his mind. But still the Patriarch and the Principal remained in their places ; and, although they were presently responsible for a more serious administrative crisis than had hitherto been experienced, they were still members of the Regency when Wellington bade adieu to Portugal.

Another small matter, which troubled Wellington not a little, remains yet to be mentioned. Until now his Military Secretary had been Colonel Bathurst, a brother of the hapless diplomatist, Benjamin Bathurst, whose disappearance in 1809 is still one of the mysteries of history. Towards the end of 1810 the Colonel

began to show symptoms of a disordered brain, and 1810. Wellington entreated him to go home on leave of absence for the recovery of his health. Accordingly the poor man repaired to Lisbon, where Charles Stuart reported him as very "distrustful and suspicious, like his brother at Vienna before his disappearance." The homeward packet was due to sail two days later, and Bathurst went on board to take his passage, but returned and allowed the ship to sail without him—"a great proof of his infirmity." It appears that his weakness was known to all his friends, for Torrens, on hearing from Wellington of his breakdown, answered that "he was more concerned than surprised." So poor Bathurst vanishes from this story; and on Christmas Day 1810 it appeared in orders that Lord Fitzroy Somerset was to be Military Secretary in his stead. Thus quietly did the most faithful and devoted of Wellington's staff-officers step into the place which for so many years he filled with honour, to leave behind him the name, happily not yet forgotten, of the most perfectly courteous gentleman who ever had to do with the government of the Army.¹

The whole of these circumstances combined to make Wellington impatient under the most trying ordeal of all—to wait two months longer than he had expected for starvation to drive Massena's army from Portugal. To do him justice he had wrought his utmost to pen Massena within the smallest possible area. South of the Tagus, and lining the river from Pinheiro to Salvaterra, lay the Second Division, commanded originally by Hill, and transferred, since Hill's departure for England in November, first to William Stewart and finally to Beresford. This disposition was designed to check any attempt of the Army of Andalusia to break into Alemtejo, a movement which Wellington greatly dreaded; and he had thought out an elaborate succession of positions where Beresford could hold back

¹ *Wellington MSS.* Sir C. Stuart to Wellington, 29th Nov., 2nd Dec. 1810.

1810. the enemy, culminating in very strongly-fortified lines on the heights of Almada overlooking the sea. North of the river the militia of Castello Branco shielded its own district ; Brigadier John Wilson with more militia guarded the country from Espinhal to Thomar ; Trant watched over the next space to westward from Coimbra to Redinha ; and the garrison of Peniche, under a very enterprising officer, Major Fenwick, sealed up the only outlet to the south-west. So well did these various bodies do their work that Massena was for months together completely isolated, neither messengers nor convoys being able to reach him unless protected by abnormally powerful escorts, while at the same time his feeding and foraging grounds were rigidly circumscribed. Being at his wits' end to subsist his troops, he was obliged to let them feed themselves, of course with infinite detriment both to their health and to their discipline. In a very short time the marauders were obliged to wander so far afield that only the stronger men could stand the fatigue, while the weaker, ill-clad, ill-fed, and ill-cared-for, died like flies. Even so the army only kept itself alive by starving the peasantry, who were forced by torture to reveal to the French parties the hidden hoards of grain which they had laid by for themselves. By such acts of violence, and by the amazing thrift which enables French soldiers to live where other men would die of inanition, Massena's army held its ground to Wellington's outspoken amazement, for week after week and month after month. "With all our money," wrote Wellington, "and having in our favour the good inclination of the people, I assure you that I could not maintain one division in the district in which they have maintained not less than sixty thousand men and twenty thousand animals for more than two months."¹

Throughout this time the Marshal made no attempt at any offensive operation. He did indeed establish at Punhete, near the mouth of the Zezere, the equipment

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 21st Dec. 1810.

for throwing two bridges across the Tagus in case 1810. he wished to pass into Alemtejo, thereby compelling Wellington to strengthen his force to south of the Tagus and to throw up batteries opposite to Punhete. But, as we have seen, Soult had rightly set aside as sheer madness Napoleon's order to march to the Tagus with ten thousand men, so that Massena had little to hope for in this quarter. From the north, on the other hand, a gleam of encouragement did reach him on the 26th of December, when a party of his dragoons, reconnoitring northward, came upon some of their own countrymen travelling south, and ascertained that they were the advanced guard of the Ninth Corps. This corps, as we know, was one of Napoleon's improvisations, consisting nominally of twenty newly-raised battalions, but actually of a mob of drafts hastily scraped together under strange officers, with no real organisation, no efficient staff, and no proper service for transport and supply. It was distributed provisionally into two divisions under Generals Conroux and Claparède, and placed under the supreme command of General Drouet, Count d'Erlon. Though it had begun the passage of the Pyrenees in October, its progress had been slow, and it was not finally concentrated at Almeida until the 14th of December. Its strength was then of about sixteen thousand men, Drouet having left three battalions in garrison at Ciudad Rodrigo, and taken over in exchange about their numerical equivalent from the wreck of Gardanne's detachment. The General's orders from Napoleon were perfectly clear and absolutely impossible of fulfilment, resembling greatly those issued to the army in Flanders by the Committee of Public Safety in 1794. He was to recover communication with Massena with a single large body of troops ; he was upon no account to make any small detachments from his army, and yet he was in some mysterious way to keep the road open from Massena's headquarters to Almeida.¹

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 17,146.

1810. In such difficult circumstances Drouet decided to march himself with eight thousand men of Conroux's division and of Gardanne's detachment by Celorico and Ponte da Murcella towards Massena, leaving Claparède's division about Celorico and Trancoso to guard his communications. Accordingly he started on the 14th, and on the 26th, as we have seen, encountered a patrol of cavalry from Ney's corps. Then followed a series of incidents which showed how rotten was the French military system in Spain. D'Erlon affected to think himself independent of Massena's command, and only after some demur obeyed the Marshal's orders to bring Conroux's division from Espinhal to Leiria. Meanwhile Claparède no sooner found himself free from d'Erlon's control than he started off to northward in pursuit of Silveira's Portuguese Militia. It must be confessed that he had some provocation, for Silveira had the foolish effrontery to attack him at Trancoso Dec. 30. with inferior numbers on the 30th of December, and, though sharply repulsed, retired to no further distance than Villa do Ponte, a bare seven miles away. Resolved 1811. to chastise such conceited temerity, Claparède fell Jan. 11. upon him in turn on the 11th of January, and driving him back in disorder chased him to Lamego, from whence Silveira was thankful to escape across the Douro. General Bacellar, who commanded the district, called up in alarm all the Portuguese parties under Trant, Wilson, and others, from Coimbra and Penacova to Castro Daire, about eight miles south of Lamego. Claparède, fearing to be cut off, then retired with all speed to Trancoso, whence he presently moved to Celorico and Guarda. Trant and Wilson, upon this, promptly returned to Coimbra and Penacova, Bacellar following them in support to the river Vouga, whereby Claparède was once again hopelessly separated from Massena. He had done no good to himself and little harm to the Portuguese.¹

¹ For Wellington's wrath at Silveira's folly, see his letter to Lord Wellesley of 26th Jan. 1811 in *Despatches*.

Although the arrival of Drouet's eight thousand men at Leiria had widened Massena's feeding-ground somewhat for the time, it could render no further service, being too small a reinforcement to warrant a return to offensive action. The new sources of supply, moreover, were quickly exhausted, and the additional mouths in the camp became a hindrance rather than a help. Nevertheless Massena, with indomitable tenacity, sat still for week after week without a sign of budging ; and Wellington, who had counted upon his retreat soon after the New Year, became very impatient. The trial was indeed severe for him, for not only his own reputation but the entire issue of the contest in the Peninsula were at stake. The Government, as he thought, though incorrectly, might find in this failure to drive Massena from Portugal an excuse for ending the war ; and if, as was considered certain, the Opposition should come into power, they assuredly would not hesitate to withdraw the troops at once from the Peninsula. Napoleon was fully aware of this, and Massena recognised it as clearly as did his great master. "I should not have required such hardships of my troops," he wrote, "if I had not reckoned that, as the campaign could not be ended by some brilliant stroke, it must become a contest of tenacity against the English army and all Portugal, looking in particular to the political crisis in England."¹

It is not surprising, then, that the news of Soult's victory before Badajoz caused Wellington the greatest concern. Yet by a singular coincidence the day of the Feb. 19. battle of the Gebora was precisely that upon which Massena convened his generals to ask their advice whether he should retreat northward, or cross into Alemtejo to join the Duke of Dalmatia. Their

¹ See Napoleon's words : "Si . . . le Prince de Galles est mis à la tête des affaires, l'armée de Wellington sera rappelée sur-le-champ." Girod de l'Ain, *Vie militaire du Général Foy*, p. 122, and Massena's despatch to Berthier of 6th March 1811 in *Wellington Desp.*, ed. 1852, iv. 828.

1811. opinions varied greatly. Ney was for passing the Feb. 19. Tagus with the entire army and marching to meet Soult ; Junot was for securing the passage of the river by a bridge-head, strongly occupied, and waiting for the arrival of the Fifth Corps under Mortier ; Reynier advocated division of the army—two corps to stand fast at Santarem, and the other to overrun Alemtejo in search of provisions and of Mortier's Corps. Massena had already made up his mind to stay on at Santarem until the fruits of marauding were no longer to be gathered, and then to retire to the valley of the Mondego ; but, to make himself safe with Napoleon, he went through the form of inviting and discussing alternative projects. Reynier's plan he could dismiss with little ceremony on the ground of unsoundness and danger. Ney's he combated upon the pretext that the passage of the Tagus would be a most hazardous operation. If it failed, the army would lose its line of retreat to Coimbra, and would be thrown back into Spain in a barren and difficult country, with scanty ammunition and with the certainty of sacrificing many guns, besides all stragglers and wounded ; if it succeeded, little would be gained, since most of the victuals had been moved from Alemtejo, and hence the army would be obliged to fall back and possibly to fight a battle with the Tagus in its rear, for there were not horses enough to draw the pontoon-train. It remained therefore only to make arrangements for retreat, and in these again the lack of horses played a prominent part. Hundreds of ammunition-waggons were destroyed and of transport-waggons were unhorsed in order to furnish teams for the guns and the remaining waggons ; but, even so, it was impossible to find animals for all of the cannon. The transport-service itself, from the first inadequate, practically vanished under the strain. With enormous difficulty fifteen days' bread for the army had been collected ; but the department in charge of the commissariat possessed no means of moving it ; and this bread was accordingly issued to the various regiments to carry as

best they could contrive. But the Colonels in their 1811. turn had no carriages, and were therefore obliged to distribute the bread to the men, by whom, in spite of strict orders that it was not to be touched until the retreat, much had been consumed or wasted before the retrograde movement had even begun.¹

Meanwhile Wellington, being unable to spare a sufficiently powerful detachment to rescue Badajoz, had decided to make at any rate a diversion in its favour by a general attack upon Massena. His plan was that his main body should fall upon Junot at Rio Maior, a part of his force at the same time engaging Reynier at Santarem, while Beresford crossed the Tagus at Abrantes and attacked the French division at Punhete. Nothing, however, could be done before the arrival from England of reinforcements, which, though long overdue, still made no appearance. February wore to an end, and March came in ; and on the third day of the new March 3. month Massena, having exhausted all his resources, gave the orders for retreat. His dispositions were made with a skill which was worthy of his great reputation, and evoked the warm admiration of Wellington. Ney was directed to march on the 4th with one division and some cavalry, and to join Drouet's detachment of the Ninth Corps at Leiria. Reynier meanwhile was instructed to stand fast at Santarem until the 5th, when he was to send one division northward and remain in position with the other ; and on the 5th likewise Ney's second division was to march to Ourem near Leiria, and Junot was to send one division to Pernes from Rio Maior. These orders were faithfully carried out ; and thus on the evening of the 5th March 5. of March Massena's position was held no longer by eight divisions but by three only.

Signs of the movement did not escape the British officers, but Wellington had been so frequently dis-

¹ Napier assumes that this fifteen days' bread was a supply which could be reckoned to last, and actually did last, for fifteen days. It was, of course, nothing of the kind.

1811. appointed in his expectation of Massena's withdrawal March 5. that he was slow to believe that it had begun at last.

He himself reconnoitred Santarem carefully on the morning of the 5th, but could perceive little change beyond the absence of a few guns; and at noon he made up his mind that nothing had been moved except the baggage and the sick. None the less he gave orders for his divisions to close up, so as to be ready for any emergency, being the more impelled to this course by the arrival of the reinforcements in the

March 6. Tagus. On the night of the 5th-6th the two French divisions at Santarem and Rio Maior marched off, blowing up the bridges of Pernes and Alviella on their way, and by noon of the 6th they had reached Golegão and Torres Novas. Loison at Punhete still stood fast; and though Beresford on the 6th crossed the Tagus pursuant to Wellington's orders, yet, finding no sign of retirement before him, he in obedience to

March 6. his instructions forebore to attack. Early on the 6th likewise Wellington occupied Santarem, and the Light Division and First Division were sent forward along the routes to Pernes and Alviella; but, while Loison remained where he was, it was difficult to divine exactly what the French movement portended. At length on

March 7. the night of the 6th and 7th Loison set fire to his boats and bridge-equipment and marched for Thomar, whither Reynier's second division was already on its way from Golegão. On the same day Junot too moved to Chão de Maçãas; and, as Ney and Drouet had remained halted at Leiria, the entire French army was thus safely aligned between Leiria and Thomar, precisely as Massena had predicted would be the case.

Wellington, meanwhile, had by noon of the 7th reached Torres Novas, where it was correctly reported that the French main body was taking the road by Chão de Maçãas. He had, however, been informed at Santarem that they were following that by Thomar and Espinhal upon Ponte da Murcella; and, since Massena's dispositions lent some colour to this report

and the peasants gave out that the French had quitted 1811. Leiria,¹ he marched on the 8th for Thomar with two March 8. brigades of British cavalry and the best part of three divisions of infantry. The cavalry, however, ascertained that Leiria was still held ; and from this and from other indications Wellington grasped the truth that Reynier with the Second Corps was retiring by the line of Thomar and Espinhal, Loison's division by the road of Ancião, and the Eighth Corps and the Sixth Corps upon Pombal, the former from Leiria, the latter from Chão de Maçãas.² Then, realising that Massena was withdrawing with all possible speed to the Spanish frontier, Wellington handed over to Beresford the Second and Fourth Divisions and ordered him to march at once for Badajoz. He had already sent to Elvas, which was in communication by signal with Badajoz, the news that Massena had retreated, as an encouragement to the beleaguered garrison to hold out to the last, and he now despatched a further message to announce the coming of immediate relief. Some of Beresford's troops actually set out on the morning of the 9th ; but on the afternoon of that day Wellington, March 9. finding Massena drawn up in strength at Pombal, thought it more prudent to recall the Fourth Division and one brigade of cavalry to rejoin his own force. He did so with the less hesitation inasmuch as he had only a few hours earlier received very favourable accounts of Badajoz.³

Unfortunately Wellington's confidence was destined speedily to be overthrown. After the victory of the Gebora, Soult had pressed the operations before Badajoz

¹ Tomkinson, p. 78.

² "Wellington talked of the ability of Massena's retreat, he pretending to throw his columns on the Thomar road, when they were really on the Leiria road ; that he (Wellington) had only just found it out in time ; and he (Massena) had got all the army he wanted together at Pombal" (*Journal of Colonel James Stanhope, MS.*).

³ *Wellington Desp.* To Beresford, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th March ; to C. Stuart, 8th March ; to Liverpool, 14th March 1811.

1811. with all possible energy, but had made no very rapid progress, Menacho meeting every stage of the siege with spirit and resource, not neglecting vigorous sorties. Unluckily in the last and most successful of these

March 3. counter-attacks on the 3rd of March the Spanish leader was killed by a chance shot, and the command devolved upon Brigadier-general Imaz. This officer bore a good reputation, which, whether deserved or not, was at once belied. The defence became spiritless and unintelligent ; and by the 10th the French had succeeded in making a wide breach. It was amazing good fortune for Soult that Menacho's successor should have been so incompetent, otherwise he would almost certainly have

March 8. been compelled to raise the siege. On the 8th alarming news came to him from all quarters. Massena had retreated ; a British expedition was menacing the French lines before Cadiz ; and Ballesteros, after defeating a French detachment in the Condado de Niebla, was marching upon Seville. Unless, therefore, Badajoz were mastered at once, it could not be mastered at all.

March 10. Accordingly on the 10th Soult made all preparations for an assault, and sent in a summons, couched in suspiciously flattering terms, to the fortress to surrender. Imaz called a large council of war, which by thirteen votes to four declared for capitulation, whereupon, after giving his own voice for defence to the very last, he proceeded at once to negotiate for yielding Badajoz to Soult. All was settled on that same after-

March 11. noon, and on the 11th the Spaniards marched out and the French marched in. Soult then left Mortier with about eleven thousand men to hold the captured

March 13. place, and on the 13th led the rest of his army back with all speed to Andalusia. He had fought a brilliant campaign, for within a very few weeks he had extinguished a Spanish army and taken a powerful fortress ; and yet in his main object he had failed, for, however powerful his diversion in Massena's favour, the French Army of Portugal had been compelled to retreat. Nor was this the result of exceptional circum-

stances or peculiar misfortune : it was due to the false policy which had led Soult into premature occupation of Andalusia. Let us now return to that province, and examine the occurrences which had recalled the Marshal thither with such haste from Badajoz.

CHAPTER II

1810. THE earliest report of the weakening of the French force before Cadiz, in order to strengthen Soult's army for Estremadura, appears to have reached Graham on Dec. 22. the 22nd of December; but it was not until the end 1811. of that month that the information was verified, and Jan. 14. not until the 14th of January that the departure and destination of Soult and Mortier were fairly ascertained. The Generals, both Spanish and English, thereupon agreed that so favourable an opportunity for an attack upon the besiegers should not be let slip; and after some discussion it was arranged that a sortie of British and Spaniards should be made by sea from the point of Santi Petri, and that simultaneously a Spanish force from Algeciras and a single British battalion—the Twenty-eighth—from Tarifa should advance upon the French lines from the rear. The operation was fixed Jan. 29. for the morning of the 29th, but the sortie was prevented by stormy weather, although the party from Algeciras, not being warned in time, mastered the village of Medina Sidonia. By this circumstance, as well as by injudicious handling of the boats, the entire plan was revealed to the French, and it was necessary to devise something new.

It was then decided that the operation should take the form of a disembarkation in rear of the enemy's lines; and Graham consented to employ the greater part of his British troops in the venture, serving under the command of the Spanish general Lapeña. Accordingly the embarkation began on the 19th of February,

and on the 21st the British portion of the expedition 1811. put out to sea. Foul weather made it impossible for the armament to put into Tarifa ; and the ships therefore bore up, and on the 22nd anchored off Algeciras. On Feb. 22. the following day the troops, with the exception of the artillery, were set on shore, and marching at half-past ten on the morning of the 24th entered Tarifa on the Feb. 24. same evening. It was still blowing hard ; the Spanish convoy had been obliged to return to port ; and Graham, stranded at Tarifa without transport, supplies or guns, felt extremely uncomfortable. Happily the Navy by great exertions brought the cannon forward on the 25th ; the Governor of Gibraltar sent bread and a few Feb. 25. mules ; and by the 26th the entire British contingent, made up by troops from Gibraltar and Tarifa to a strength of rather over five thousand men, was safely assembled at the latter place with ten guns.¹ Graham thereupon organised it into two brigades and two flank battalions of infantry, under Brigadiers Dilkes and Wheatley, Lieutenant-colonel Andrew Barnard of the Ninety-fifth, and Lieutenant-colonel Browne of the Twenty-eighth. On the 26th the weather moderated, Feb. 26. and on the following day the Spanish convoy, which Feb. 27. had been driven back by the gale, came in. Lapeña and the whole of his troops were landed before night-fall ; and on the 28th the entire army made its first Feb. 28.

¹	2 squadrons, 2nd Hussars, K.G.L.	206
2 brigades artillery	200	
Detachment R.E.	47	
Dilkes's brigade { 2 composite batts. of Guards, } . . .	1221	
{ 2 cos. 2/95th }		
Wheatley's brigade { 1/28th (less its flank cos.), 2/67th, } . . .	1764	
{ 2/87th, 2 cos. 20th Portuguese }		
Barnard's batt. : 2 cos. 2/47th, 4 cos. 3/95th . . .	594	
Browne's batt. : 2 cos. 1/9th, 2 cos. 1/28th, 2 cos. 2/82nd	475	
1 co. Royal Staff Corps	33	
Rank and file	4540	
Add $\frac{1}{8}$ for officers, sergeants, and drummers . . .	560	
		5100

1811. march forward about ten miles, halting near the pass of Facinas. Here the organisation of the force was completed. Lapeña's troops were distributed into two divisions—the advanced guard of five battalions under General Lardizabal, and the centre of six under the Prince of Anglona, with four squadrons of cavalry under Colonel Whittingham. Two more Spanish battalions—Ciudad Real and the 4th Walloon Guards—were courteously made over to Graham's command, and his division of infantry was constituted the reserve. In return, Graham's two squadrons of German cavalry were entrusted to Whittingham.

It was now for Lapeña to decide as to the direction which he should take against the rear of Victor's lines. Two routes were open to him, divided by the plain of La Janda, which at the time was under water. Of these the western road leading direct upon Vejer was the better for wheeled traffic, but tactically disadvantageous, since it would conduct the army straight upon Victor's headquarters. On the other hand, by striking across country on the eastern side of La Janda, Lapeña could plant himself at Medina Sidonia in an attitude of permanent menace both to Victor's rear and to the French communications at large. Hence the Marshal would be compelled to come out and attack his enemy at a considerable distance from his lines, in which case, even if Victor were successful, the garrison of Cadiz would have ample time and opportunity to fall upon the weak remnant which he had left behind to maintain the siege; while if the Marshal were defeated the disaster would be fatal. For these reasons—or at any rate for some reason—Lapeña resolved to move north-westward.

All Spanish troops at this time being imperfectly disciplined, and Spanish staff-officers for the most part of small experience, it was with singular perversity that Lapeña decided to make his marches as difficult as possible by conducting them at night. He began this method of advance upon leaving Facinas on the evening March 1. of the 1st of March, when the Spaniards were in the

front and the British in the rear of the column. The 1811. British, misled by their guide, spent the greater part of the night in marching and counter-marching, and after nineteen hours on foot had traversed no more than thirteen miles. Lardizabal's vanguard, however, March 2. had duly reached Casas Viejas, where it found two companies of French infantry ensconced in the convent. The officer in command of these troops, thinking that he had to do with guerillas, barricaded himself in the building and prepared to hold his own; and Lapeña's first impulse seems to have been to leave him unmolested, for he made no effort to drive the French out until Graham represented the necessity for doing so. The light company of the Twenty-eighth was then detached for this duty, whereupon the French hastily retreated. They were, however, overtaken by the Spanish and German cavalry, and after firing one volley, threw down their arms and were cut to pieces without mercy. From the few prisoners who were seized, it was ascertained that this small body of men at Casas Viejas was but an advanced post of a larger body, numbering some three thousand men, under General Cassagne, which had been sent by Victor to occupy Medina Sidonia. More welcome news could hardly have been brought to a general in such a position as Lapeña. Victor, by throwing this weak detachment forward into an isolated position fifteen miles from his lines, had deliberately made over the initiative to his enemy. Lapeña had only to advance upon Medina Sidonia with his fourteen thousand men, and Victor would be bound to march out at once in force to rescue Cassagne. Thereby all the advantages of an occupation of Medina Sidonia would be gained without the trouble of accumulating supplies there. A successful battle could not avert from the Marshal the danger of the destruction of his siege-works: an unsuccessful battle would mean his utter ruin. Lastly the arrival of a reinforcement of sixteen hundred men under General Beguines gave every encouragement to

1811. the Spanish commander to bring matters to an early
March 2. issue.

Nevertheless Lapeña's nerve quailed before so prompt a realisation of the object of his campaign. Far from hastening forward to overwhelm Cassagne, he resolved on the contrary to leave a small detachment to watch him, and to move southward across country to the western road. Moreover, though the shortest route from Casas Viejas to Vejer lay over firm downland, he resolved to recross the streams of the Barbate and the Ceclemin, which were unfordable except in the vicinity of Casas Viejas. Finally, as though every moment were precious, he gave orders for the army to march at five in the evening. Graham, whose men had only reached their camping-ground at noon, protested against hurrying them on before they had had time for rest and food, and Lapeña agreed to delay the march until eleven. Then intelligence came in that the chosen route was for the time impassable owing to inundations, and the movement was

March 3. again put off until the morrow. Lapeña's orders to Graham were to follow the Spaniards at six in the morning, but it was much later before the Spaniards left camp; and, after the Ceclemin had been passed, the guides led the column towards the head of the flooded plain of La Janda, which, in the circumstances, was not unnatural. Graham, suspecting apparently that Lapeña was returning to Facinas, galloped forward to remonstrate. Lapeña rejoined that the shorter route was impracticable for artillery; but Graham appears to have insisted upon a change of direction and to have prevailed. The entire column therefore counter-marched, with the British division for once in the centre instead of in the rear, and turned southward, when after a time the Spaniards came to a dead stop. Graham galloped forward to discover the reason, and found that the way was blocked in a shallow depression by the rush of the waters from the flooded plain into the Barbate. A causeway, over which the stream flowed waist-deep,

formed the passage over this obstacle ; and the entire 1811. Spanish army was beginning to grope its way across in March 3. ones and twos, the men taking off shoes and stockings, and the officers passing over on their soldiers' backs. As a pretext, apparently, for putting an end to such folly, Graham begged that the British guns might be allowed to pass. They came up accordingly under escort of the Rifles, who plunged straight into the water in sections, and passed through it as if on parade. The guns followed, and, when one of them stuck fast, Graham and his staff threw themselves off their horses into the flood and hove it out.¹ Then the Spaniards began to feel shame. The Prince of Anglona set the example of taking to the water, and his men followed willingly enough. It was, however, midnight before the column reached its halting-ground at Vejer, having taken fifteen hours to traverse twelve miles. Every man was wet through and much fatigued ; and, the weather being bitterly cold, it is probable that this march sent scores, if not hundreds, of men to hospital. It should seem that Graham took great risks when he insisted upon following the shorter route ; but the alternative direction preferred by the guides would have meant a detour of twenty miles.

A party of French dragoons had retired from Vejer as the allies approached ; and, as the situation of the town commands all the country round, they were able to carry to Victor a fairly accurate account of his enemy's numbers. But Cassagne had already reported the advance of the enemy in force upon Medina Sidonia ; and the Marshal had instructed him to stand fast, in the assurance that he himself would come to his assistance with every man that could be spared. Moreover, Cassagne had since sent true information that there were still Spanish troops before Medina Sidonia, so that Victor naturally was greatly embarrassed to divine

¹ These details I have taken from Colonel Stanhope's journal. They are confirmed in substance by Surtees, *Twenty-five Years in the Rifle Brigade*, pp. 111-12.

1811. whether the Allies were advancing in two columns or March 3. in one. As to their object he had already a clue. Lapeña, before leaving Tarifa, had written to General Zayas, whom he had left in command at Cadiz, that he should be close to the eastern side of that city on the 3rd of March. Zayas accordingly on the night of the 2nd had thrown a bridge of boats across the Santi Petri, and sent over the creek a battalion which had entrenched itself at the bridge-head on the eastern bank. There was of course no sign of Lapeña on the 3rd, and the only result of the movement was to show Victor that Zayas contemplated co-operation with a relieving force, a part of which relieving force was at any rate upon the southern road. The Marshal laid his plans accordingly to foil any such operation.

March 4. First, on the night of the 4th, he attacked the bridge-head, and, though he failed to capture the boats of the bridge, drove out its garrison with very heavy loss. Thus he checked any offensive movement from the side of the city. Next, he ordered Villatte's division to bar the southern road on the narrow isthmus where it approaches the creek of Santi Petri, and concentrated his two remaining divisions, those of Leval and Ruffin, at Chiclana, so as to fall upon the enemy's flank while Villatte was opposing their front. Against this plan there was always the objection that Zayas might re-lay his bridge of boats and fall upon Villatte's rear ; but, to meet this contingency, Victor gave directions that Villatte was to hold his position only until Ruffin and Leval had fairly engaged the flank of the Allies.

Meanwhile Lapeña was busily pursuing his system of harassing his troops to the utmost. Graham entreated that, as the moment for action was near at hand, the marches might be short and the men kept fresh, but the Spanish general again insisted upon his favourite nocturnal movements ; and the army left camp at five in the evening of the 4th. He had promised Graham to advance no further than to Conil, a march of eight

miles, but no sooner had he set the army in motion 1811, than he hurried it forward in a different direction March 4, through a country which was utterly unknown to his staff. At every few minutes the troops were halted, only to be set again in motion, and, when at last daylight March 5, broke, they were found to be moving towards Chiclana. Then there was a sudden halt, while the Spanish staff-officers with wild chattering and gesticulation sought to reconcile the contradictory statements of the guides. They were about to countermarch and look for another road when Graham galloped up and pointed out that, if it were necessary for the army to move further to the south, there was nothing to prevent it from breaking into line of columns, and taking ground to the left over the open plain which lay between them and their destination. His advice was adopted ; the Allies streamed south-westward over the heath, making, as Graham said, a remarkably pretty field-day ; and thus they approached the close ground which led towards Zayas's bridge-head on the Santi Petri. This may be described as an isthmus of irregular shape which is formed by the Almansa creek—a branch of the Santi Petri—on the north and by the sea on the south ; and it broadens out from a width of some five hundred yards at its western extremity to four times that distance at the eastern end. Its eastern boundary is marked by an isolated hill called the Cerro de Puerco, or Boar's Hill, which rises to a height of about one hundred and sixty feet above the plain, and is crowned by a ruined watch-house called the Vigia de la Barrosa. For this reason it has received the name with the English of Barrosa Hill, the appellation being shared by a tower on the seashore upon its southern face. The distance from the Santi Petri to the foot of this eminence is about three miles, and much of the ground was at that time covered by pine-woods. The dominating position of Barrosa Hill makes it necessarily the key of the isthmus.

The Spanish cavalry of the advanced guard mounted this hill not long after daybreak, but encountered no enemy ; nor was it until they had searched the woods

1811. for some time that they at last reported that a French March 5. force was drawn up on a wooded ridge about a mile and a half to the east of Santi Petri, between the tower of Bermeja and the creek of Almansa.

The Allied troops had by this time been on foot for fifteen or sixteen hours under most harassing conditions ; but Lapeña decided to attack the French troops near Bermeja, which were of course Villatte's, without delay. The Spanish columns therefore pushed on into the pine-wood ; and shortly after nine Graham with the British reached Barrosa Hill, where in obedience to orders he halted, sending out a patrol of German hussars to watch the country towards Chiclana. About the same time Lardizabal deployed his divisions and opened his attack upon Villatte, who being of almost equal strength resisted stoutly, and repelled his assailants with some loss. But the fight was renewed with fresh battalions from Anglona's division and was finally decided by Zayas, who threw his bridge across the Santi Petri, and threatened to take the French in rear. Observing this, Villatte withdrew his troops northward to the creek of Almansa, crossed it at a ford by the mill, and turned to bay on the other side. Lapeña then checked Lardizabal's advance, and the action came to an end, each side having lost from three to four hundred men.

So far, therefore, all had gone well. The French lines at Bermeja had been taken, and communication with the garrison of Cadiz had been re-established. Overjoyed with his small success, Lapeña resolved that he would attempt no more, but would be satisfied with securing what he had gained ; and to that intent he ordered Graham to lead his division also down to Bermeja. The British General strongly objected to such a movement. The Spanish infantry, he urged, had left their packs on Barrosa Hill ; the baggage of the army was assembled at its foot ; the hill itself formed the gate of the isthmus, the closing of which could not be risked ; and no enemy would dare to assail the Spanish troops at Bermeja while a powerful force lay

on the hill ready to fall upon his flank. As a result, 1811. apparently, of his remonstrances, Lapeña agreed that March 5. Browne's British battalion and the two Spanish battalions of Graham's division should remain behind, together with three battalions of Anglona's division, to hold the hill ; and he gave orders to Whittingham to move his cavalry and Beguines's infantry, some thirteen hundred men, to the same spot. Since his patrols reported no movement about Chiclana, Graham presently plunged into the pine-woods below, following the track of Lardizabal's guns, with Wheatley's brigade leading and the artillery and Rifles in rear, though the forest was so dense that it was only with difficulty traversed by cannon or mounted men.

About half an hour later the German vedettes reported troops to be in motion to the north-west at the edge of the forest of Chiclana, and a patrol, which was despatched to the spot, confirmed the intelligence. Whittingham rode out with both cavalry and infantry, and presently perceived the enemy advancing rapidly in what appeared to be three columns. Victor, in fact, was growing impatient. He had watched the blundering movements of the Allies at daybreak, and, mistaking them for manœuvres, had been greatly perplexed. He had on the previous day sent orders to Cassagne to rejoin him, and had just received a reply that the detachment could not be with him for two or three hours. He knew that part of the Allied force was at Bermeja, another part at Santi Petri, and a third at Barrosa ; and he could see no red-coats—for Browne's battalion was on the southern slope—upon the hill last named. It seemed to him, therefore, that he had a good chance to seize the key of the position, possibly to cut off the troops that held the hill, and at least to pen the Allied army in between it and the Santi Petri. Accordingly he issued orders to his cavalry, which was nearly five hundred strong, to turn Barrosa Hill by the south-east and to seize the track along the coast, while Ruffin's division, of about twenty-five hundred men,

1811. should ascend the hill from the east, with Leval's of March 5. four thousand more in support. Whether Victor was at the moment unaware of the situation of Graham's battalions is uncertain ;¹ but in any case the order of his march would enable him to form a front to the south if events should prove it to be necessary. Above all he urged upon his subordinates that speedy movement was of vital importance.

Meanwhile Browne's battalion, together with a squadron of German hussars and the British reserve of ammunition, remained halted on the southern slopes of the hill, the men being greatly fatigued after seventeen hours on the march without food or drink. No one contemplated such a possibility as that of a French attack, so the Germans dismounted and loosened their girths, and all ranks, both of them and of the English, lay down on the grass and fell fast asleep. Below them about the road and near the sea lay the baggage of the army, not, it should seem, in the best of order. Such was the situation when a German hussar came galloping in with the intelligence that the enemy was in motion. Lapeña, who was himself upon Barrosa Hill, seems thereupon to have lost his head completely ; for without losing a moment he gave the word for immediate retreat upon Cadiz. The Spanish battalions, catching the alarm from him, poured down with some haste and confusion to the road by the coast, while Whittingham, after warning Browne of his peril, stood by with his mixed force to cover the withdrawal of his chief and of the baggage.

Throughout this time the French advanced rapidly, and, one and all of them being in full uniform, presented a most imposing appearance. So firm a countenance, however, was offered by the squadron of German hussars

¹ I am aware that both Victor in his despatches and Lapeña in his narrative speak of a continuous line formed by Villatte on the right, Leval in the centre, and Ruffin on the left ; but there were considerable gaps between these bodies, and the accounts given by both seem to me to smack of wisdom after the event.

as it retired before Leval's division that Leval, or, as 1811, some say, Victor himself, halted the battalions and March 5. formed them into squares, as if to resist cavalry, before resuming their progress due south. Ruffin, meeting with no impediment, made a wide sweep to eastward so as to avoid a marshy mere called Laguna del Puerco, and pressed on over the north-eastern slope of Barrosa Hill, his two brigades moving apparently in single column of divisions,¹ with the artillery in rear, and a cloud of skirmishers in front, the cavalry being in advance of all. The Spanish guns seem to have fired a few shots at them with some effect; but, upon Lapeña's order to retreat, the infantry gave way very speedily, and it is likely that two or three Spanish cannon were for a time abandoned.² Browne now marched off his battalion north-westward to join Graham, and Ciudad Real and the Walloon Guards were on the point of following him, when they were recalled by Whittingham, who saw the importance of guarding at any cost the access to the track along the coast. The two above-named battalions then advanced towards the summit of the hill, while two more followed the shore to the Torre Barrosa, where they drove away some parties of French horse which had captured certain baggage and were in full enjoyment of the plunder. The leading French infantry, probably the 9th Light,³ prepared to attack this rear-guard, which fell back in good order until the

¹ *I.e.* of double companies.

² Blakeney (pp. 199-200) says distinctly that he saw these abandoned guns on the field, and Victor in his despatch claims to have captured three pieces; but Whittingham states clearly that the two guns that were in action were brought off.

³ I have no authority for affirming that the 9th Light were there except that their losses were slight, and that they seem to have taken no part in the fight on the hill. Whittingham mentions that the French advance was covered by a battalion of light troops, also that the French tried to turn the Allied position with infantry, and that at the close of the action there was a detached body of French infantry to south of Barrosa hill. Moreover both Norcott and Whittingham speak of the French as advancing in three columns, the third column being presumably the 9th and the French cavalry.

1811. baggage was safe, and finally took up a position at the March 5. Casa de las Guardias, about a mile from the Torre Barrosa, where it kept some five hundred French skirmishers continually engaged.

Ruffin, meanwhile, wheeled his main body to the right, and crowned the summit of Barrosa Hill, whence a squadron of his cavalry, perceiving Browne's battalion as it descended the northern slope, galloped down upon it. Browne drew his men into square, and bade them reserve their fire until the enemy were within ten paces ; but at this moment Major Busche's squadron of German hussars swept past an angle of the square, dashed into the midst of the French, broke them, rallied on the far side of them, and charging through them once more, dispersed them in all directions. The fugitives, however, took refuge with their infantry ; and the Germans, who had been conspicuous for their gallantry through every stage of Whittingham's retreat, retired, not without serious loss, behind the Spanish battalions.¹ Browne therefore was able to enter the wood in safety ; and during this interval several messengers had rushed into the thicket to warn Graham that the French were marching in force upon Barrosa Hill. Though unable to see fifty yards in any direction, Graham at once gave the order "Right about face, form as you can," for he felt certain that Lapeña in person was still on Barrosa Hill and would need his assistance for the defence of that all-important position. Riding back towards the edge of the wood, however, he came upon Browne's battalion, which reported the withdrawal of the Spaniards from

¹ I follow here the account given by Henegan (*Campaigning in the Peninsula and the Netherlands*, vol. i.), which is borne out in its main details by Beamish, Whittingham, and Schwertfeger, though Henegan is the sole authority for the deliverance of Browne's battalion, which, according to his account, suffered heavily from the French artillery in the course of its retreat. Of course this flies in the face of Blakeney's account (*A Boy in the Peninsula*), though Blakeney admits the attack of the cavalry, but the more closely I study Blakeney the more I am convinced that his narrative is one long tissue of falsehood, written mainly for self-glorification.

the hill ; and on emerging from the pines Graham could 1811. see the Spanish troops in full retreat, Ruffin's division March 5. ascending the northern slope, and that of Leval within range of cannon-shot on his own left flank. He took in the whole situation at a glance. If he also should retire upon the narrow position of Bermeja through the forest, while the Spaniards fell back towards it on one side by the coast-road and on the other from Almansa Creek, there would be no possibility of forming an orderly line of battle against attack, and the entire Allied army might be lost ; while even at the best the whole object of the long march from Tarifa would be thrown away. In spite of all disadvantages, therefore, of entanglement in the forest, exhaustion of the men, and inferiority of numbers, he determined to assail the French at once, while their two columns were yet disunited and unarrayed in order of battle. Beyond doubt he counted not a little on the moral effect of a sudden offensive movement by what was, at the moment, an invisible force.

The whole body therefore turned about as best it could ; and Browne's battalion, about four hundred and seventy bayonets, being from the nature of the case far in advance of all the rest on the new front, went forward single-handed in line against Barrosa Hill.¹ By this time Ruffin's division was forming upon the eminence, with eight guns unlimbered on the summit a few hundred yards north of the watch-tower. At the foot of the slope ran a broad ravine ; and no sooner had Browne's companies crossed it and reformed than they were saluted by a blast of grape and musketry which dashed more than half of the officers and nearly two hundred men to the ground. With astonishing coolness the survivors closed in to their centre, when a second salvo

¹ According to Blakeney, Graham ordered the battalion at first to advance in skirmishing order, but changed his mind and said that he "must show something more serious than skirmishing." Yet Barnard on the left, as we shall see, was allowed to attack in extended order, and consequently produced far greater effect with far smaller loss. I doubt if Graham gave any such command.

1811. swept away yet other officers as well as some fifty men. March 5. Browne, still unhurt, strove desperately to form a third line, but in vain, for the remainder of his soldiers very pardonably had taken cover wherever they could find it, and, though still actively firing from behind their shelter, could not be induced to leave it.

Captain Norcott's two companies of the Ninety-fifth, together with the artillery, had been the next to emerge from the wood ; the gunners being so eager that, according to the evidence of an eye-witness, one team tore up by the roots a pine-tree in which its gun had become entangled. Norcott had extended his men before leaving the thicket ; and upon entering the open ground he stretched his right along a wide front, in order to cover the formation of the rear battalions, and engaged the enemy's sharp-shooters. The British guns in one mass, heavy and light battery together, then took up a central position between the two French divisions, and opened fire at a range of twelve to fifteen hundred yards upon Leval's men. The first battalion of Guards appeared next, followed at a short interval by the second battalion ; but here the two brigades of infantry became to some extent intermixed. Dilkes, at the request of Major Duncan of the artillery, told off his two companies of the Coldstreamers to escort the guns, and these troops accordingly quitted their comrades of the Guards. On the other hand certain companies of the Sixty-seventh by some mistake became separated from their own battalion and followed Dilkes's brigade. Thus it was that Dilkes's brigade took the form of an irregular echelon, the First Guards leading on the left, with three companies of the Third Guards somewhat on their right rear, and part of the Sixty-seventh in the right rear of the Third Guards. Moreover, as Dilkes inclined to his right, so as to attack some way to the west of Browne's battalion, the natural tendency was for the rearward battalions to drop farther and farther behind.

Though necessarily in disorder when they emerged from the wood, "more like a chain of *tirailleurs* than a

line,"¹ the Guards did not pause to correct their formation, but strode rapidly on, improving their array as March 5. they moved. In due time they came to the ravine at the foot of the hill, passed it at a steep and difficult place, and on reaching the other side were received with a terrific storm of shot from the enemy's guns. Ruffin afterwards told the British officers that he had never seen men fall so fast, and expected the line to break and turn at every instant. Nevertheless the Guards passed on without faltering, keeping their left shoulders up and bearing always to their right, so as to turn the left flank of the French. The enemy's troops opposed to them at this point were the two battalions of the 24th of the Line, about one thousand strong, with two grenadier battalions, jointly of about the same strength, and the 96th of the Line in support. According to one account the 24th came down the hill to meet the British;² but, whether this be so or not, it is certain that long before the British reached the summit of the hill, red-coats and blue were exchanging a murderous fire.³ There is no evidence to show if the French were in column or not, but it is probable that they were, and that in consequence they could not contend with the British line. At any rate they seem to have given back steadily, whereupon Victor in person brought forward the two grenadier battalions on his left and summoned the 96th of the Line to his right. As these last moved off, however, the fragments of Browne's battalion—from two to three hundred men—finding themselves no longer under fire, sprang up in all directions and plied the French 96th with a biting fusillade on their flank. At the same moment the Sixty-seventh and Norcott's Rifles appear for the first time to have overtaken the Guards,

¹ Stanhope's *Journal*.

² So Blakeney says, but I am extremely suspicious of all his statements, for he unguardedly admits later in his narrative that for a time at any rate the Guards were hidden from his sight by the irregularity of the ground.

³ This is evident from Dilkes's statement.

1811. and prolonged the overlapping line of fire round the March 5. French left. Nevertheless the duel of musketry seems still to have lasted for some time, though it was too unequal to be continued for very long. Ruffin and his brigadier Rousseau were both of them mortally wounded ; great numbers of French officers had fallen, and the men, scourged by the continual spread of fire round their flanks, began to waver. The British officers called to the men to charge ; the red-coats leaped forward with a shout ; and the whole of Ruffin's division dissolved in confusion and ran down the hill, leaving two pieces of cannon behind them.

During this time there had been a simultaneous attack upon Leval's column. The British guns, as we have seen, were the first to emerge from the wood ; but, while these were taking up their original position, Barnard's four companies of the Ninety-fifth and the two companies of the 20th Portuguese turned to their left, and swarmed forward against the six battalions before them. They had the advantage of being concealed by the wood until they arrived within three hundred yards of the enemy ; and their onset took the French by surprise. Indeed it seems to have been pushed forward with a vigour and audacity which produced considerable effect upon the enemy, in marked contrast to the heroic but useless sacrifice of Browne's battalion. Fortunately the French, as already mentioned, had been formed in squares owing to a false alarm of cavalry, and from this cause received considerable damage both from Duncan's guns and Barnard's rifles while still in the process of deployment. Meanwhile the main body of Wheatley's brigade was filing out of the wood, not without wrangles over precedence between the Guards and the Eighty-seventh, and forming line under a heavy and destructive fire from Leval's guns.¹ So severe was the trial that Graham in person led the Coldstream Guards to cover the advance of Duncan's

¹ The Eighty-seventh lost four officers and over fifty men while waiting for the rest of the brigade to come up and form.

two batteries, which unlimbered at close range and began 1811. with beautiful accuracy to ply the hostile masses with March 5. grape and shrapnel. Slowly the French battalions accomplished their deployment, and having formed their order of battle began to advance. They were drawn up in two lines, the first consisting, from right to left, of the first and second battalions of the 54th, and of the second and first battalions of the 8th, with a grenadier battalion and the 45th in reserve. Each battalion seems to have been arrayed in column of double companies, that is to say, with a total depth of nine ranks and a frontage of about seventy men. Nevertheless they advanced firing, the second battalion of the 8th by volleys at the word of command, the remainder independently and indiscriminately. From this cause the second battalion of the 8th forged slightly ahead of its three fellows, until the general shape of the array was convex. However, with twenty-seven hundred men against seven or eight hundred, Leval's first line speedily swept away Barnard's riflemen and Portuguese from their front; and these skirmishers, after doing excellent work and suffering heavy loss, fell back in rear of the main body to reform.

The French, who had not yet wholly recovered from the disorder caused by their first false manœuvres, would have welcomed a little respite to enable them to improve their formation; but no breathing time was granted to them. The British line was by this time complete, some fourteen hundred strong. On the left were the battalion companies of the Twenty-eighth; next to them the two companies of the Coldstream which, not being required for the guns, had joined Wheatley's brigade; next to the Coldstreamers the Eighty-seventh under the fiery Major Hugh Gough; and on the right of the Eighty-seventh a weak half-battalion of the Sixty-seventh. Some distance to the right of all were the guns,¹ now

¹ I know of no authority but the map in Wyld's *Atlas* for stating that the guns were on the right of the line, but that authority seems to me sufficient.

1811. advanced to within six hundred yards of the French, March 5. with their escort of two companies of the Forty-seventh. No sooner had the skirmishers come in than the whole line moved forward ; and from the nature of the case the first collision occurred between the second battalion of the 8th and the British Eighty-seventh. Both held their fire until they came within close range, when they exchanged a volley which, since the Eighty-seventh could discharge at least thrice as many bullets as the 8th, was necessarily more destructive to the latter. The Eighty-seventh continued its advance, but the French would not await them ; and the column, turning tail in disorder, surged aside upon its first battalion, which had doubtless suffered also from the volley, and stood with it helpless and paralysed, a choking mass of panic-stricken men. Then it was that Graham who was leading the Coldstreamers on foot, his horse having been shot under him, struck up their muskets and shouted, "Men ! cease firing and charge." Guards and Eighty-seventh at once dashed forward, and in an instant were in the thick of the defeated battalions. Gough was smitten with so great pity for the unfortunate Frenchmen that he could not bring himself to touch one of them ; but his soldiers were troubled with no such compunction. They were Irishmen out for a fight ; they had suffered some loss when halted under fire ; and the enemy, who outnumbered them by at least three to two, were turning their backs. They leaped into the crowd with their bayonets, and made unsparing havoc of the 8th, breaking them up in all directions in the revelry of slaughter. Beyond all doubt the Sixty-seventh on the left flank of the French and the Coldstream on the right¹ were not behind the Irish ; and the carnage was frightful. The eagle of the 8th was the centre of a desperate struggle,

¹ Mr. Oman says that the Coldstream was engaged with the 54th farther to the British left, but this is disproved by Stanhope's *Journal* and by the address of the men of the Guards to Graham (Delavoye, p. 509). Moreover, the Guards made some kind of a claim to the capture of the eagle, and must therefore have been near it. See Surtees, p. 119.

some men of the Eighty-seventh dashing furiously at the 1811. colour-party, who on their side made a noble defence. March 5. Finally the trophy was torn from the French by Sergeant Masterson,¹ and borne away by him in triumph.

But meanwhile Leval had ordered up the 45th, which was in reserve, to restore the fortunes of the fight, and Gough saw with dismay that he had nothing to oppose to it. With enormous difficulty, for he was obliged almost to cut his excited Irishmen down before they would obey him, he rallied the right wing of the Eighty-seventh, formed a new front, and advanced firing upon the new enemy. The 45th, seven hundred strong and perfectly fresh, should have overwhelmed the trifling force which opposed it ; but the men were demoralised by the defeat of their comrades, and, when the Irish were within fifty yards of them, they broke and fled. Their losses had been small, so that their failure must be attributed to sheer misconduct.

Farther to the British left the French made some attempt to manœuvre ; the first battalion of the 54th moving into the pine-wood with the idea of turning Wheatley's left flank. To effect this object the battalion must necessarily have fetched a wide compass, since the British front was considerably broader than the French ; and it should seem that upon this account Colonel Belson of the Twenty-eighth was content either to ignore it or to leave it to be dealt with by the Rifles and Portuguese. He himself therefore led the Twenty-eighth to meet the second battalion of the 54th, advancing close to it without discharging a shot ; and only when the enemy began to deploy did he open fire by platoons, giving particular orders to the men to aim low. Shattered by the withering fusillade when in the act of changing formation, the 54th shrank back ; but none

¹ Mr. Oman has happily ascertained that the Mastersons have continued to furnish the Eighty-seventh with brave men from generation to generation since Barrosa, and that the present representative of the family won the Victoria Cross in South Africa in 1900. The captor of the eagle obtained a captain's commission.

1811. the less it foiled two attempts of the Twenty-eighth to March 5. charge, and only gave way at the third attack with the bayonet. Then it turned and fled for shelter to the rear of the grenadier battalion, which covered its retreat towards the defeated regiments of Leval's left. The other battalion of the 54th had meanwhile lost itself in the wood, so that it took no part in the action, and only with some difficulty rejoined the rest of the army.

Thus on both right and left simultaneously the French had been beaten and were in full retreat. Dilkes, meanwhile, had halted his brigade at the summit of Barrosa Hill in order to reform it, the men being much exhausted by their exertions during the past twenty-four hours, and the ranks sadly thinned by heavy losses. Victor therefore seized the opportunity to rally Ruffin's division, the French dragoons, or some part of them, having hastened back to cover the retreat. The British presently resumed their forward movement, bringing up their right shoulders so as to edge Victor's battalions still further off their ground to the east, until at length they were marching almost at right angles to the line of their original advance. The French, though retiring, resisted stoutly, manoeuvring to avert the flank attack, turning about when the ground favoured them, and keeping up what Dilkes described as a "severely destructive fire." At the same time the French dragoons menaced the right flank of the British so constantly that the Third Guards actually began to form square. Until this moment Whittingham appears to have kept these dragoons fully occupied; but beyond question he now permitted them to withdraw from his front, allowing himself to be distracted by a mere handful of horse, backed by the French skirmishers, who by this time were retiring towards their main body. One squadron of German hussars, however, was still in advance and beyond reach of his orders; and its commander was seeking Whittingham to beg permission to bring forward the two remaining troops also, when Colonel Ponsonby, seeing the danger

of the British infantry, galloped up and, taking personal command of the advanced party, led it away. March 5. Moving rapidly round the south slope of the hill, Ponsonby presently came up to the French dragoons, and, despite the superiority of their numbers, crashed through them into the artillery which lay beyond them, and through the artillery in turn upon the infantry. Some of these last threw down their arms, and in fact two guns were actually captured by the hussars ; but the bulk of the French infantry stood firm and drove back the daring horsemen with some loss. A few more squadrons would have ensured the rout and destruction at least of Ruffin's division, but Whittingham and his Spanish horse were still far in rear.

The French therefore continued their retreat ; and, as the outer flank of both of the French divisions had been turned, the two naturally converged and presently united, when Victor by sheer personal ascendancy contrived to steady them somewhat, and drew them up, as best he could, some way to north of the Laguna del Puerco with his right resting on the pine-woods. The British, meanwhile, were following them but slowly, being much exhausted ; and, though apparently at one moment Browne's flank battalion sent out skirmishers to engage the French, these were presently recalled, and the British guns coming up effectually drove the enemy from this last position. Victor then retired to Chiclana, the British being too thoroughly wearied to pursue him farther.¹

¹ Considering the small scale and short duration of the action, the conflicting accounts of Barrosa are astonishingly difficult to reconcile. Mr. Oman assigns quite a different time to myself for the charge of the German hussars ; and he may be right, for he has certainly Blakeney on his side. On the other hand the narratives of Dilkes, Hamilton, and Whittingham, and the accounts given by Beamish and Schwertfeger, seem to me to favour my own view, while I am always suspicious of Blakeney. According to Acheson it was not the hussars but the Sixty-seventh who took the two guns at the close of the action, and that too before the hussars charged. The truth is that the movements of Dilkes's brigade are extremely obscure.

1811. Thus after an hour and a half of sharp work the March 5. action came to an unsatisfactory close—unsatisfactory because with the forces at their disposal the Allies ought to have made an end of Victor's army. The game was in Lapeña's hand. If, at the first intelligence of Graham's return towards Barrosa Hill, he had set his troops in motion either southward to support Graham, or eastward to intercept Victor's communications with Chiclana, he could not have failed to achieve a great success. The British were quite prepared to accomplish, as in fact they did, the actual overthrow of the French, and all that was required of the Spaniards was to pursue and annihilate them. But Lapeña would not move. He had contrived to get through a campaign of five days, not indeed without prodigious blunders, but without serious mishap. He had won his little success over Villatte ; he had seized the safe position of Bermeja, and in that position he sat in tremulous security, like a squatted hare which the hounds have overrun. It was nothing to him if his allies were overwhelmed by numbers. That was their affair. It was nothing to him if the opportunity for a great victory were missed. That was of small account as compared with the integrity of his person and reputation. He was known to all about him as Doña Manuela—the Lady Manuel—and true to this description he gathered his skirts about him on this fateful day, and with quivering anility sat still.

For Whittingham's failure it is more difficult to account. He was a good and gallant soldier, who had done fine service in the field and had been badly wounded at Talavera. He was as indignant with Lapeña as any one else ; he fully recognised that much more might have been made of the victory ; he made no secret of the fact that there had been a great opportunity for him to act effectively with his cavalry, and he lamented that circumstances had rendered it impossible for him to seize it. Herein he seems to have been deceived, for it is certain that the German horsemen

under his command were extremely impatient at being 1811. kept out of action, and that his apparent slowness was March 5. condemned by the entire force of the British. But his account of his proceedings is clear and circumstantial ; its accuracy has never been impugned ; and we know so little of what passed on the western slopes of Barrosa Hill that it would be rash to accuse him of more than, at worst, an error of judgment. It must be added that the two Spanish battalions, which had been attached to Graham's division, marched eagerly to rejoin him as soon as they were permitted to do so, but arrived, through no fault of their own, just too late to take part in the conflict.

For the rest, the battle is one of the bloodiest and one of the most creditable to British troops that is to be found in the history of the Army. It is undoubtedly the fact that Wheatley's brigade could match only twenty-six hundred of all ranks against four thousand of Leval's division, and Dilkes's brigade fewer than nineteen hundred of all ranks against over twenty-five hundred of Ruffin's division, while even in the matter of artillery the French had twelve guns against Graham's ten. Yet, as has been well pointed out,¹ all the French accounts suggest that Victor was hopelessly outnumbered, and that his troops were called upon to achieve the impossible. The official account in the *Moniteur* speaks of four lines of British, one in rear of another ; and, though one of the French field-officers present describes the opposing forces as of about the same strength, yet he asserts boldly that Victor had neither cavalry nor artillery.² The rout of Leval's division is upon the whole intelligible, for the entire body was taken somewhat by surprise, its artillery was overmatched, and its infantry was mishandled by the General. But the defeat of Ruffin's division, which was not surprised and which had

¹ Oman, iv. 119-20.

² Vigo-Roussillon. This account has some little value for the movements of Leval's division ; but several of the personal details seem to me suspiciously egoistic and picturesque.

1811. the advantage not only of stronger ground and superior March 5. numbers but of six cannon—whereas Dilkes had none—and of fresh troops—whereas Dilkes's were hungry and jaded—this is most difficult to explain. It may, however, be remarked that Ruffin's regiments were identical with those which had been so terribly maltreated at Talavera, so that possibly they were unnerved by the recollection of their last encounter with the red-coats. Whatever the reason, it is certain that the French behaved unworthily of themselves, and that they paid for their misconduct with very heavy losses. Of something over seven thousand men present two thousand and sixty-two were killed, wounded, or taken ; the number of prisoners, however, amounting to less than one hundred and fifty. Of these casualties no fewer than seven hundred and twenty-six fell upon the 8th of the Line, which lost, roughly speaking, half of its numbers, while in Ruffin's division the 96th left two hundred and fifty-six men on the field out of seven hundred and sixty-four who were engaged in the action. Among the wounded were Villatte, Ruffin, who was taken prisoner, and General Rousseau.¹

Nor did the British suffer less heavily, for they had twelve hundred and thirty-eight killed and wounded out of fifty-two hundred men on the field. In Browne's flank battalion among five hundred and thirty-six of all ranks present there were two hundred and thirty-six casualties. In the First Guards two hundred and nineteen were slain or hurt out of six hundred, in the Coldstream fifty-eight out of two hundred and eleven, in the Third Guards one hundred and two out of three hundred and twenty, and in the Eighty-seventh one

¹ The last-named was found lying desperately hurt with his white poodle beside him ; and, when the bearers approached to carry the General off, the dog flew at them, so that it was necessary to smother him with a cloak before they could touch his master. Poor Rousseau died at midnight and was presently buried, but the dog broke loose and tried to dig his way down to him. With some difficulty the British soldiers carried the animal to General Graham to whom the poodle, after refusing food for some days, finally attached himself, eventually coming back with Graham to England.

hundred¹ and seventy-three out of seven hundred. 1811. Not a corps lost less than one man in six except the March 5. Sixty-seventh, half of which, through no fault of its own, seems to have come into action very late against Ruffin. Altogether the behaviour of the troops was very fine indeed, whether they were British, Germans, or Portuguese. Their trophies, besides the eagle taken by the Eighty-seventh, were six guns.

After the action Graham left his companies of riflemen at the house on the summit of Barrosa Hill to guard the wounded, and withdrew his troops across the Santi Petri into the Isle de Leon. Being excusably furious with Lapeña for leaving him in the lurch, he was resolved to have no further dealings with him; nor did he think fit to apprise the Spanish General of what he had done until the movement was actually accomplished. It was with some difficulty that at about three on the morning of the 6th Colonel Stanhope March 6. gained admission to the quarters of Lapeña near Santi Petri, and informed him that the British had retired into Cadiz. "Why did not General Graham acquaint me earlier," exclaimed Lapeña, "so that we might have retired also? I cannot remain here without the British." Another Spanish officer, General Lery, now struck in, regretting that after such a victory General Graham was abandoning his allies, and adding, "There are now no French in Chiclana, and a single light battalion could take possession of it." Then Lapeña begged that the British might halt for a day, so that the Spaniards could cross the Santi Petri with them. Stanhope declared that it was too late to think of such a thing, and could not restrain the ironical comment that Lapeña would be in no great danger now that the French had been defeated and Chiclana, according to General Lery, had been evacuated. Later in the day Graham, calling at the Spanish head-quarters, found that Lapeña was still quaking under fear of an attack, whereupon in a few plain words he gave his Spanish colleague to understand that he would never again ex-

1811. pose his divisions to the danger of serving under such March 6. a commander. This closed the conference, and a few hours later the Spanish troops came hurrying over the bridge of Santi Petri into the Isla de Leon. It was not less hard on them than on Graham to be placed under so wretched a leader.

Meanwhile the French had succumbed, at any rate for a time, to a depression which was almost a panic. Victor indeed kept his head, and rallied his discomfited troops upon Villatte's division and Cassagne's detachment, which had rejoined him from Medina Sidonia; but the beaten battalions were thoroughly demoralised, and all round the besieging lines there was alarm, for the naval force of the Allies had made petty descents at various points during the action, and had even captured one battery near Santa Maria. None, except Victor, dared to contemplate the prospect of a second attack, and at a Council of War the Marshal stood alone in proposing to risk another action behind Chiclana. Finally, it was resolved that, if the Allies should follow up their success in force on the 6th, they should not be resisted further than to enable most of the forts to be blown up and the stores and flotilla to be destroyed, after which the First Corps should retreat on Seville. Accordingly on the morning of the 6th the entire army, excepting Villatte's division (now under Cassagne's command), retired behind the river San Pedro beyond Puerto Real, Cassagne having orders, in case he was attacked, to give a signal for blowing up all the forts on the southern section of the lines, and to withdraw. On the same day the British and Spanish gunboats threw ashore some six hundred seamen and marines, who dismantled every one of the lesser batteries from Rota to Puerto Santa Maria, unresisted, for Victor had drawn in all outlying posts. Nothing further, however, was done, and the Marshal,

March 7. sending out a reconnaissance on the morning of the 7th, discovered that only a small body of the Allied troops was still lying to the east of the Santi Petri. This small body—the three battalions of Beguines—retired on the

next day to Medina Sidonia, and, being hunted thence on 1811. the 9th by a French brigade, fell back towards Algeciras. Thus within a few hours of Victor's gloomiest anticipations the danger that threatened him had passed away.

It seems extraordinary that for his own security Lapeña should have sent out no cavalry to ascertain the whereabouts of the French. If he had done so, he might have discovered Victor's preparations for retreat, and taken advantage of the situation. Instead of this he proposed, apparently with the idea of saving his face and bringing odium upon Graham for the refusal to co-operate with him, to send six thousand men under General Zayas towards Chiclana, an inadequate force which would certainly have been beaten and dispersed if met by Cassagne's division. The breaking of the bridge of Santi Petri, however, put an end to this plan, wherefore Lapeña busied himself with preparing an account of the expedition, in which he set forth that all had gone well until Graham from sheer temper withdrew into Cadiz. So shameless a misrepresentation called forth an indignant vindication of himself from Graham, addressed to Mr. Wellesley. Other Spanish officers then came forward to justify their countryman; the newspapers of Cadiz opened their columns to controversy; and for weeks there raged a bitter war, on paper, between the champions of Spain and such British officers as were sufficiently skilled in Spanish to answer them. Pending examination of his conduct by a court-martial, Lapeña was superseded by General Coupigny; but the Court pronounced him blameless, and the Regency decorated him with an order. The Regency, meanwhile, had also offered a dukedom to Graham, who had haughtily refused it; and thus all was friction and unpleasantness in Cadiz. Lapeña, however, was not restored to his command, while Graham presently resigned his place to General Cooke, and went to join Wellington in Portugal. With these changes the quarrel that arose out of the action of Barrosa may be said to have died away.

1811. The possible results of the whole of the operations if the Spanish commander had been less incompetent, it is difficult to conjecture. It so happened that in these same days Ballesteros had begun a new raid from the Condado da Niebla. Starting with four thousand men, on the 2nd of March he defeated Rémond's detachment, and compelled him to fall back upon Seville. Following up his success, on the 5th of March he reached San Lucar del Mayor, where he was confronted with the joint forces of Rémond and of General Darricau who, leaving Seville to the custody of a handful of invalids and Spanish partisans of France, had sallied out to the rescue of his colleague. Ballesteros, doubtless with wisdom, declined to fight, and fell back into the Condado, whereupon Darricau, having pushed Rémond westward to La Palma, returned on the 9th to Seville. On the same day Ballesteros by a rapid advance fell upon Rémond by surprise, took two guns from him, and again advanced to San Lucar. Darricau meanwhile had received some small reinforcements to his garrison at Seville, but upon the news of the defeat at Barrosa had sent them on to Victor. Thus, if Lapeña had done his duty in that action, the greater part of the First Corps must have been almost annihilated. Ruffin's and Leval's divisions would have been captured on the spot ; Cassagne's detachment would have been intercepted ; Villatte's division and the French troops in Cadiz itself could hardly have made good their retreat to Seville ; Darricau and Rémond must either have retired northward or, if they tried to rescue their comrades, would have found themselves between Ballesteros on one side and the pursuing troops of Lapeña on the other. Seville must certainly have fallen again into Spanish hands, and practically Soult would have found himself faced with the task of reconquering Andalusia. None of these things happened, and the sole result of the British victory was that Soult was obliged to return southward from Badajoz, more hurriedly than would otherwise have been the case, though his operations in

Estremadura had already failed to save the retreat of 1811. Massena from Portugal.¹ And yet it may be doubted whether the sacrifice of the fruits of Barrosa was, after all, any very great misfortune, for it allowed the French to persist in their grand error, the siege of Cadiz, with little inconvenience even for the moment to the Allies, but with lasting and ruinous damage to themselves.

¹ The authorities for the action of Barrosa are the despatches of Graham and Victor, printed in *Wellington Desp.*, ed. 1852, iv. 696, 833; Vigo-Rousillon (two papers in *Revue des deux mondes*, 15th Aug. 1891, full of inaccuracies); Lapène, Schépeler (very valuable); the reports of British officers in *Wellington Supp. Desp.* vii. 126-134; Blakeney; Henegan; Rait's *Life of Lord Gough*; Bunbury; Surtees's *Twenty-five Years in the Rifle Brigade*; and of course Napier and Arteche. For the map and for most valuable information concerning the ground and the action I am indebted to the kindness of Lieut.-Colonel Willoughby Verner, to whom I must record my grateful thanks.

CHAPTER III

1811. LET us now return to Wellington whom we left con-
March 9. fronting Massena at Pombal on the 9th of March. As we have seen, the French Marshal had conducted his retreat so skilfully that he had misled Wellington, almost up to the last moment, as to his true movements ; and apparently he flattered himself early in the day that he had deceived him altogether. He had every intention of occupying Coimbra, and of taking up cantonments along the northern bank of the Mondego, and he issued his commands accordingly. On the 9th the actual position of his various corps was as follows :—The divisions of Marchand and Mermet of the Sixth Corps, with some cavalry in advance, were in rear of Machados ; Conroux's division of the Ninth Corps was at Boica, over four miles farther north and east ; Montbrun's cavalry division was at about the same distance north of Boica at Arranha ; Marcognet's brigade of the Ninth Corps was at Pombal itself, with a detachment about six miles to north and east at Redinha ; the Eighth Corps was at Venda da Cruz, about midway between them ; and Loison's division was at Ancião, some ten miles due east of Pombal, as a connecting link with the Second Corps, which was following the road from Thomar to Espinhal. Massena's orders for the 10th were that Montbrun with two regiments of cavalry should proceed to the Mondego to look for fords, taking with him also an officer of engineers and a company of sappers to repair the bridge at Coimbra. Junot meanwhile was to fall back with his Corps to Soure, about ten miles north of Pombal, and throw his

strongest division across the Mondego as soon as the 18th. bridge was open. Furthermore, Ney was to post Conroux's division at Redinha and Marcognet's brigade at Condeixa, midway between Redinha and Coimbra, with orders to communicate from thence with Conroux. Reynier likewise was to pursue his way northward to Espinal.

Of these movements only the last of all was March 10. executed. The British cavalry came into collision with the French horse before Machados early in the morning; and in the afternoon the Light Division entered the plain before Pombal and exchanged a few shots with Ney's infantry. It was reported, indeed, to Ney that seven thousand men had occupied some heights dominating the valley of the Soure, from which they could fall upon the town without following the road. Ney presently passed on this alarming intelligence to Massena, with dark hints that, if Wellington should receive further reinforcements from Leiria in the course of the night, the British might attack on the morrow. As a matter of fact three out of Wellington's five remaining divisions were at the moment still at Thomar, and of the rest one was twenty-four hours' and the other forty-eight hours' march from Leiria. It was perfectly true that he had summoned practically his entire force to confront Massena at Pombal, excepting only Nightingall's brigade, which he had ordered to follow Reynier; but he could not by any possibility assemble the whole of it before the 11th. Massena of course did not know this, but he was aware that British reinforcements had lately arrived in Lisbon; and there was a vague idea abroad that these had been, or were to be, landed in some mysterious manner upon the coast to outflank the French on the west.¹ At any rate the Marshal was so much disquieted that he countermanded his orders to Montbrun and Junot, bade the former assemble his troops in readiness to support Ney, and ordered Reynier

¹ As Mr. Oman says, this imaginary force is always cropping up in the contemporary French accounts.

1811. to communicate with him at once. Thus throughout March 10. the whole of the 10th, while Wellington's divisions were hastening to join him, the bulk of the French army remained stationary. Only a small party of Montbrun's cavalry moved up within sight of Coimbra, ascertained that the bridge had been broken down, and tried in vain to discover fords. Heavy rain had fallen on the previous night, and there was every likelihood that Massena's passage of the Mondego would be prevented by floods.

However, in the evening the Marshal renewed his former directions. Soon after midnight the Sixth Corps was to retire to the line of Pombal ; Drouet—or to give him his title, d'Erlon—was to take Conroux's division to Redinha ; Junot, after sending one division to support Montbrun on the Mondego, was to move behind the Soure about Redinha with the other ; and Loison likewise was to march towards the same village. Ney's reply to this was that d'Erlon had announced his intention of proceeding at midnight with Conroux's division of the Ninth Corps for Condeixa and thence to Vizeu. D'Erlon from the beginning had disputed Massena's authority over the Ninth Corps, alleging that it was to act independently under the Emperor's immediate command ; and, after submitting unwillingly to the Marshal's orders for some weeks, he chose this moment for withdrawing himself altogether. Massena summoned the recalcitrant general to his presence, and, having plied him in vain with energetic remonstrance, told him to go his way. Then turning to Ney, who had remained silent throughout the scene, he announced his intention of fighting on the morrow. Ney insisted that in that case his own Corps must fall back in rear of Pombal ; and, apparently in face of Massena's direct orders to the contrary, he drew off his two divisions at two o'clock in the morning towards Venda la Cruz, leaving as rear-guard a single battalion with one gun on the heights above the town, and a body of dismounted dragoons in the castle which dominated it. Massena

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himself spent the night of the 10th at Redinha, whither 1811. he had already sent his baggage,¹ seemingly in full confidence that Ney would defend the position in front of Pombal. Such was the decay of discipline in the once famous French Army.

In the course of the night the Third Division joined Wellington, and the Fourth was reported to be approaching ; wherefore, having ascertained that the main body of the enemy had moved back, the British March 11. commander pushed forward two companies of the Ninety-fifth and the 3rd Caçadores, with the rest of the Light Division, the German Hussars, and Ross's battery of artillery in support. The light troops encountered those of the enemy in the woods before Pombal and, driving them backward at great speed, pursued them over the bridge into the town. So rapid was the advance that although the bridge was mined, the French had not time to blow it up, and Ross's guns did considerable execution among them. The pursuers were preparing to assail the castle when Ney, coming up from the heights to the north with four battalions, thrust them back, and setting fire to some houses brought off the remnant of the discomfited rear-guard. The flames checked any further advance of the Allies for a time, and Ney took up a new position on the heights behind the town, showing a front both to west and to south. Wellington issued full orders for a fresh attack in the afternoon, but the Third Division did not come up until late, after a march of twenty miles ; while the Fourth, at the head of the column in the Thomar road, did not arrive until dusk, so that the operation was perforce abandoned. The losses of the British did not exceed thirty-seven in killed and wounded.

¹ The above narrative is taken from Koch's *Vie de Masséna*, vii. 347 sq. The writer is of course a violent partisan of the hero and therefore biased against his rival Ney ; but the documents which he quotes seem to be conclusive as to his accuracy upon these points, and d'Erlon's disloyalty was a subject of common talk in the French Army. See Delagrange, p. 174.

1811. On this same morning Montbrun again approached March 11. the Mondego, and sent out parties both above and behind Coimbra to discover fords, but with no great success, the flood having not yet fallen. He reported, however, that Coimbra was still held by the levies of Trant and Silveira ; the real fact being that Trant alone was opposed to him with three thousand raw levies and six guns, and that even he had orders from Wellington to fall back to the Vouga if seriously menaced. Montbrun added that on the morrow he March 12. should inspect the fords in person, which he duly did, while at the same time a body of his cavalry attempted to creep out to the end of the damaged bridge of Coimbra under the fire of Trant's guns. The general result of his reconnaissance was that at Pereira, eight miles below Coimbra, a place was found where the river, being broken up by three islets, could be crossed by a bridge of ten trestles, which, wood being abundant, might be constructed in thirty-six hours. This much, one would have thought, might have been ascertained with less than three days' reconnaissance ; and indeed Montbrun's performance of this duty wears no very pleasant aspect. He should have been able to oust Trant from Coimbra without difficulty ; and it is not surprising that he, equally with d'Erlon and Ney, is suspected of a resolution to deliver the French army from the miseries of Portugal at whatever cost.

Meanwhile, in the course of the night, Wellington's whole army had joined him, and at daybreak of the March 12. 12th he set his troops in motion ; the Royal Dragoons, German Hussars, Pack's Portuguese brigade, and the Light Division forming the advanced guard. Ney, however, had retired from Venda da Cruz a full hour earlier, and had fallen back upon Redinha, where he had taken up a position upon a high plateau in the angle between the Redinha and Soure, the former river covering his right and the latter his left. In his front was a defile ; and in his rear a bridge carried the road

over the Redinha into a narrow gully dominated by 1811. another line of heights. On this commanding ground March 12. he had drawn up the divisions of Mermet and Marchand, together with at least three regiments of cavalry and fourteen guns, his flank being covered by thick woods of pine which overhung the two streams to right and left. Within three miles of him to eastward was Loison's division at Rabaçal, and eight miles to rear of him at Condeixa was Junot's Corps ; so that within three to four hours Massena could have massed from twenty-five to thirty thousand men upon the spot. On arriving before this position the Light Division deployed over a very wide front, plunged into the woods on Ney's right, and, driving out the French sharp-shooters, emerged on to the summit of the plateau, where they were met by a heavy fire from Ney's embattled infantry and by a charge from his cavalry. At the same time Picton's division made a similar movement on the Marshal's left ; but on this side also the British skirmishers were checked, while Pack in the centre seems not to have pushed his advance with any vigour. Mistrusting the appearance of affairs, for in addition to the troops on the plateau Ney made ostentatious display of a reserve, which appeared to be strong, on the other side of the Redinha, Wellington suspended the attack until another division should have come up from the rear.¹

Then followed a long period of waiting until the Fourth Division could pass through the defile and deploy ; and during this interval it should seem that Ney drew off Marchand's division under cover of the ground, and posted it on the other side of the Redinha upon a height which commanded the bridge, leaving in

¹ Mr. Oman treats Wellington's attack as having been deferred from the first until the rear division came up, and therefore as having been executed in one stage only. It is true that the only authorities which mention this preliminary stage of the action are Napier, Moorhouse (*Hist. of the 52nd*), and Koch (*Vie de Masséna*), so that Mr. Oman may be right ; but I incline to the belief that there were two stages in the attack.

1811. the original position only Mermet's division, the cavalry, March 12. and guns.¹ At length Wellington's new line of battle was formed, Picton's division on the right, connected by Pack's brigade with the Fourth Division in the centre, and the Light Division on the left, each of them in two lines, with the cavalry in rear, and the rest of the army in reserve. At a signal of three guns fired by the artillery the whole advanced in superb order, extending far beyond Ney's array upon both flanks. The Marshal thereupon fired a salvo of his cannon, and began under the screen of the smoke to withdraw the remainder of his troops, the cavalry retiring to his right, and the guns and infantry to his left towards the bridge. The movement was perhaps deferred a little too long, for there was some crowding at the bridge; and it was only by skilful handling that Mermet was able to draw off his infantry in alternate battalions² and form them in rear of Marchand's. Ney had taken care to mount cannon so as to command both the bridge and the ford below it, and thus some time elapsed before Wellington's dispositions could be completed; during which interval the Marshal pursued his retreat for two or three miles, when he again turned to bay upon advantageous ground. Once more Picton's division worked round his left flank, when Ney, manœuvring always with the same skill, again fell back towards Massena's main body at Condeixa, and night put an end to the action.

The losses on both sides were very nearly equal, those of the British numbering two hundred and five, those of the French two hundred and twenty-seven. Some contempt has been poured upon Wellington, both by French and English writers, for allowing himself to be for so long arrested by a far inferior force. It may be doubted whether such criticism is of great value. The

¹ Such is Koch's account, vitiated throughout by inaccuracies and by a strong desire to blame Ney on behalf of Massena. Nevertheless there seems to be nothing unlikely nor unskilful in it.

² That the struggle at the bridge was sharp is shown by Kincaid's *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*, pp. 50-51.

case is one of those in which temerity, if successful, 1811. would have been lauded to the skies, but, if unsuccessful, would have been condemned as culpable carelessness. The details concerning Ney's actual numbers are still obscure, and it is by no means certain that in the circumstances Wellington showed undue caution. Indeed, if it be the fact that the divisions of both Marchand and Mermet were on the south side of the Redinha when the British first overtook the French rear-guard, then it may be asserted that Wellington was not only prudent but right. His army was still England's only army; and it could have served no purpose to lose a number of men in a partial engagement when the same result could be attained by a few hours' delay. The country was an ideal one for rear-guard actions; Massena's though a retreating was not a beaten army, and most of his generals were tacticians of skill and experience. To have dealt with them disrespectfully would have been to court at the best a costly advantage, at the worst some humiliating reverse.

At Condeixa Massena reached the parting of the ways, for this was the last point south of the Mondego where he had the alternative of retreat either to Coimbra and the northern bank of the river, or eastward to Miranda do Corvo, and so by Ponte da Murcella to the Spanish frontier and Ciudad Rodrigo. The former course was undoubtedly that which he would have preferred to adopt; and Montbrun's report, received at six o'clock that evening, showed that, if thirty-six hours could be gained for the construction of a bridge, the passage of the Mondego would be feasible whether Coimbra were seized or not. Nevertheless, Massena seems to have decided at all hazards to secure his retreat to the eastward, though apparently with some lingering hope of fulfilling his first intention. He therefore gave orders for his baggage and his sick to start in the course of the night for Miranda do Corvo, and for Junot to leave one of his divisions before Condeixa and send the

1811. other to Fonte Cuberta, a little to the north of Rabaçal,
March 12. in order to strengthen Loison and ensure his communication with Reynier, who continued to stand fast at Espinhal. He also sent an urgent message to d'Erlon, adjuring him to remain during the 13th at Miranda do Corvo, and promising to relieve him on the 14th with one of Junot's divisions. Lastly, summoning Ney, he obtained from him the promise to hold the position of Condeixa till the last moment, if possible for the whole of the next day, in order to ensure the safe passage of the convoy to Miranda do Corvo. All these orders can have had but one object, the protection of the convoy, and they therefore point undeviatingly to a retreat on the south side of the Mondego. But none the less it appears that Massena instructed his engineers to begin building the bridge at Pereira ; and it is certain that he directed, or at any rate allowed, Montbrun to remain in front of Coimbra with a slightly increased force. These two arrangements cannot have been intended to serve as feints, for Wellington could have no certain information whether Coimbra were safe or not, and they therefore indicate that the idea of crossing the river had not been altogether abandoned. Upon the whole it should seem that the Marshal regarded this operation as impracticable unless he were relieved of his baggage and other encumbrances ; but that he cherished some hope of accomplishing it if he could hold Wellington at bay before Condeixa for twenty-four hours. Possibly he had some idea of passing his baggage across the Mondego, in spite of the steepness of the banks, at some point not many miles above Coimbra ; but the entire episode is somewhat obscure, though it points to an indecision which was very unusual in so great a commander as Massena.

Meanwhile Wellington, who on the 12th had moved the Sixth Division to Soure wide to westward of the main body, ordered it to close in again towards Condeixa March 13. on the 13th, and on the same day continued his pursuit of the French. Arriving before Condeixa he found

Ney duly ensconced in a very strong position which, 1811, having been further strengthened by abatis and breast-works, was absolutely unassailable. The long train of French baggage filing towards Ponte da Murcella, however, revealed the true state of affairs ; and Wellington, divining instantly that Coimbra must still be in Portuguese hands, issued orders for the Fourth and Light Divisions to hold the enemy in front, while the Sixth, which had reached Ega, should turn his right flank, and the Third by a wide movement to eastward should not only overlap his left, but threaten his line of retreat to Miranda do Corvo. Picton marched off accordingly by an exceedingly rough and circuitous track over rocky mountains, at first, apparently, in a south-easterly direction towards Furadouro.¹ Owing to difficulties of ground his progress was slow, and it was between two and three o'clock in the afternoon² before his column came into sight of Ney, seemingly when crossing some very high ground a little to the south of Furadouro, from which point its road turned northward. No sooner did Ney perceive the movement than he hastily evacuated his position, set fire to Condeixa to check the advance of the Allies, and fell back some three miles south-eastward to Casal Novo. Whether or not he sent a message to apprise Massena of this movement is disputed, but the fact certainly remains that later in the day a patrol of Wellington's German hussars, penetrating into Fonte Cuberta, came upon Massena and his staff while at dinner in the open air, and but for the bold countenance of the Marshal's escort might well have captured him. As matters fell out, he escaped without difficulty to the infantry of Loison's division, and was soon in safety ; but the incident inflamed his animosity against Ney to violent heat. The principal way from Fonte

¹ This is the point at which the division is shown in Wyld's *Atlas* ; and, although I have no other authority for assuming Picton to have taken this route, I incline to accept it.

² So say Napier and Koch, though other narratives would make the time two to three hours earlier.

1811. Cuberta to the main road from Condeixa to Mirando do March 13. Corvo joins that road to west of Casal Novo, so that the British advance might conceivably have cut off Loison's division from the main body. This, maintained Massena, was the design of the Duke of Elchingen ; he had retreated by stealth so that his chief might be captured by the enemy ; and in truth there was some foundation for the charge. The divisions of Loison and Clausel had been stationed at Fonte Cuberta on purpose to parry any such wide turning movement as that of Picton,¹ and the position was so admirably chosen for the purpose that it was not easy to understand Ney's alarm for his left flank. As, however, he was the last man likely to succumb to panic, it is fairly certain that he abandoned the position of Condeixa either because he wished to compel the evacuation of Portugal or, as is more likely, because he honestly believed himself to be too weak to resist Wellington when the whole of the British force was deployed for attack.

Once awake to his situation Massena waited until nightfall, and then led his two divisions by a bad by-road to Casal Novo. But Ney's hasty retreat had imperilled another of Massena's detachments, that namely of Montbrun. This officer was still loitering aimlessly before Coimbra on the morning of the 13th, and had attempted to gain entry to the town by specious promises of good treatment. As a matter of fact Trant had withdrawn the whole of his troops in the night except one battalion of militia and two guns ; but an astute sergeant of artillery, Jose Correia Leal by name, was cunning enough to detain the French negotiator for some hours upon various pretexts, until Montbrun received the news of Ney's retreat.² Then Montbrun

¹ The whole of this episode is exceedingly obscure, and I can only set down such conclusions as I have been able to draw from close study of the map.

² Here again (see Oman, iv. 149) at least one French authority asserts that Ney sent no message to Montbrun. Evidently the ill-feeling between Massena and his subordinates was such that they would believe any evil of each other.

found himself in a very dangerous situation. If the British were in occupation of Condeixa, it was quite obvious that he could not retreat along the great road ; and in fact the only means of escape lay by a goat-path which followed the south bank of the Mondego to the valley of the Eça, and turned up the latter river to Miranda do Corvo. This path, therefore, he took, and, though discovered and hunted by some of Wellington's patrols, rejoined the main army with no greater loss than that of his wheeled vehicles and a few prisoners. Altogether this was an eventful day, though not a shot was fired from beginning to end of it.

When the divisions of Loison and Clausel reached Casal Novo, Ney's Corps was already in position a little to west of it, with the Eighth Corps in support at Chão de Lamas, from three to four miles in rear. Massena then directed Reynier to fall back on the next day towards Miranda do Corvo and thence to Poiares, so as to leave Foz d'Arouce free for the entry of the Eighth Corps. The British troops for their part closed up till within touch of the French rear-posts, even Picton's division being no more than a mile from them. The morning of the 14th broke dark with March 14. dense fog, through which the advanced companies of the Light Division were pushed forward with insufficient support and became sharply engaged with Marchand's division, which formed the French rear-guard. Gradually the entire Light Division was drawn into action, and, when the fog lifted, found itself in no very pleasant situation, for it was too far compromised to retire, and too weak to make any headway against superior numbers in a strong position. Wellington, however, pursuing his former tactics, had already sent Picton to turn the enemy's left flank, at the same time detaching the Fourth Division still farther eastward to Penella, so as to regain touch with Nightingall's brigade. In due time, therefore, Marchand was forced back ; but Ney, with his usual skill, took advantage of a succession of hills to contest every inch of ground, and made good his retreat without

1811. difficulty to Miranda do Corvo, where Montbrun's March 14. cavalry and the Eighth Corps were ready to receive him, with Reynier's Corps in support on the further bank of the Eça. The action continued in a desultory fashion until late in the day, at the close of which the British had gained seven or eight¹ miles of ground after nearly twelve hours of incessant skirmishing.² The losses of the Allies numbered over one hundred and fifty, the casualties falling for the most part on the Light Division, which with one voice condemned Erskine for throwing away lives to no purpose by sheer obstinate mismanagement. Among the wounded were two of the brothers Napier, William, the historian, and George. The losses of the French were probably about the same as those of the British.³

Massena's three corps were now concentrated, with a total strength of some forty-four thousand men ; but, on the other hand, the Marshal had withdrawn his left flank guard by recalling Reynier from Espinhal ; and there was nothing to prevent Cole and the Fourth Division from turning the position of Miranda do Corvo. He seems early on the 14th to have countermanded his previous directions to Reynier to move from Espinhal,⁴ but too late ; and now the Eighth Corps was with him in a state of starvation and therefore of discontent, swelling the chorus of curses upon the name of Portugal, in which the loudest voice was that of Ney himself. Taking every circumstance into consideration Massena decided to hasten his retreat, and gave orders that after destroying all baggage, the bulk of its wheeled vehicles, and all worn-out animals,

¹ Mr. Oman says fourteen miles ; but I think that this must be a slip, for the distance from Casal Novo to Miranda in the modern survey is but six miles as the crow flies.

² Rifleman Harris describes this day's work as the most harassing that he ever experienced.

³ Koch gives the losses at 60 killed and wounded only ; but Mr. Oman (iv. 153) shows that the official figures are untrustworthy ; and moreover the French lost over 100 prisoners, laggards and stragglers.

⁴ So says Koch, vii. 382.

the army should renew its march on that same night. 1811. Accordingly at ten o'clock Reynier's Corps began the March 14 movement, followed by Junot's at midnight, and by Ney's an hour later, the last-named firing the village March 15. of Miranda do Corvo as he left it. The road was steep, but the march was short, for Massena's purpose was to hold the heights of Foz d'Arouce, not more than seven miles distant, until the bridge over the Alva should be re-established. On arriving at Foz d'Arouce the Second and Eighth Corps crossed the river Ceira with some difficulty, the bridge having been damaged by the peasants, and took up a commanding position on the other side of the water. Ney, though Massena had expressly ordered that the Sixth Corps also should cross and break down the bridge behind it, kept the infantry divisions of Marchand and Mermet¹ and Lamotte's brigade of cavalry on the western side of the stream. It is difficult to see in this arrangement of the Duke of Elchingen any object beyond pure insubordination; for, the Ceira being in flood, there was no possible retreat for him excepting by way of the injured bridge, or in other words by a dangerously narrow defile. But this was not all. Numbers of baggage-animals were kept with the troops on the exposed side of the stream; the soldiers lit their fires to cook their food; Lamotte's cavalry dispersed to find forage; and the most ordinary precautions of vigilance seem to have been completely neglected. Massena, it must be observed, had betaken himself to Venda Nova, some six miles in rear, in order to be near the bridge over the Alva, which he was repairing at Ponte da Murcella.

The retreat was effected without interruption from the Allies owing to a dense fog, which forbade any movement on their part until nine o'clock; and it

¹ Some authorities (*e.g.* Koch, Marbot, and Fririon) declare that the whole of Mermet's division was on the west bank of the Ceira; others (whom Mr. Oman has followed) say that one brigade only was there. Koch gives actual details of the movements of the regiments of both brigades, from which I conclude that both were on the west bank.

1811. was not until three, or even later in the afternoon,¹ March 15. that the Third and Light Divisions came up to the position of the French rear-guard. Acting upon their experience of the previous days, Picton and Erskine judged that Wellington would not attack, and directed their troops to encamp ; whereupon the British kindled their camp-fires and prepared to make themselves comfortable for the night, thereby lulling Ney still deeper into false security. So matters stood when shortly before dusk the Commander-in-Chief rode up, and, grasping the situation after a short reconnaissance, decided to attack at once. Ney's troops were drawn up in a semi-circle upon some heights before the village, his right—Marchand's division—resting on a wood near the village itself, and his left—Mermet's division—upon steep ground about a mile from it. The Light Division, supported by the Sixth, was directed to assail Marchand ; and Picton's division, supported by the First, to engage Mermet. It is difficult to gather exactly what followed, for the French accounts are obscure and contradictory, but the main facts are pretty clear. In the first place the British advance assuredly took the enemy by surprise, for the French were not all of them in their stations for action. Next it is certain that there was a panic in the enemy's centre, though it is not clear how it was brought about. One account ascribes it to the appearance of a party of British riflemen in the village itself, who had stolen into it unnoticed by a hollow way, and so given the French to fear that their retreat was cut off.² Another narrative says that four French guns, trotting too fast down a hill, were upset, and that the infantry imagined that they had been charged by British cavalry. A third story is that the French foot were shaken by an acci-

¹ Three o'clock is the hour given by Picton. Robinson, i. 384.

² Kincaid (*Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*) mentions that he saw a party of riflemen, raw recruits, going down a hollow way to certain destruction, and that he ran forward to stop them, when he was knocked over by a spent bullet on the head. Costello mentions the raw recruits, but not the hollow way.

dental shot from one of their own guns which fell 1811. disagreeably close to them ; and a fourth relates that March 15. the French 39th gave way on seeing the fall of their colonel, Lamour, and carried away another regiment with them. However that may be, it seems clear that the two French brigades on the extreme flanks stood firm ; but that two, if not three, regiments of the two brigades in the centre broke away and, firing madly upon each other, made a rush for the bridge.

On reaching it, however, the fugitives came upon Lamotte's cavalry, either in the act of crossing to the west bank, in order to take up its appointed position, or at any rate moving towards the bridge. The passage was instantly blocked ; the panic increased ; and the runaways, turning headlong down to their left, plunged into a ford a little way down the stream, and were swept away by scores. The confusion appears to have become so general that the officers gave orders for the pack-animals to be ham-strung, lest they should fall into British hands ; and some five hundred of them were houghed accordingly. All this must have taken place before the British attack had been pressed home ; otherwise Ney's situation would have been desperate. A small party of British riflemen, however, presently penetrated to the bridge ; and the Marshal, having with much difficulty rallied some men of the 69th¹ on his extreme right, fell upon the green-jackets with vigour and drove them back upon their supports. This counter-attack seems to have checked the foremost of the British effectively ; for Ney, under cover of the falling darkness, was able to draw off the rest of his men with little molestation except from the guns or two British horse-batteries and of one French battery, which last in the dark mistook friends for foes. The passage accomplished, the bridge was blown up, and the engagement came to an end. Altogether the affair

¹ So say (as Mr. Oman points out) Fririon and Massena. Koch and Marbot, however, say that the regiment was the 27th, which was on the extreme left.

1811. was of small importance, though, by the admission of March 15. the French officers present, the divisions of Marchand and Mermet were within a hair's-breadth of a disastrous rout. Ney feared at first that he had lost five hundred men drowned ; but great numbers rejoined him in the night, and it is probable that his total loss from all causes did not exceed four hundred.¹ The 39th, however, left its eagle in the river ; and its colonel, wounded by a bullet from his own men, was taken prisoner. The casualties of the British were no more than seventy-one killed and wounded, which number, by a singular chance, was distributed among no fewer than thirteen different corps.

The one vision which every British soldier seems to have retained of Foz d'Arouce is that of the five hundred helpless horses and mules houghed or half-killed by the French in their recent panic ; and the indignation of the troops, curiously enough,² was such that by all accounts they would have showed no quarter if they had fought the French next day. But on the March 16. 16th Wellington called a halt. His system of transport was rapidly approaching perfection, but that of

¹ Mr. Oman estimates the French loss at 250 only, judging from the small number of officers who fell. In a panic, however, the officers mostly do not fly with the men. Hence few of them would have been drowned ; and it is, I think, pretty clear that the British never really pressed the French, so that the casualties of the latter from lead and steel would have been trifling. More than one French authority (as Mr. Oman shows) admits a loss of 400 men ; so for once I presume to differ from his estimate, without however impugning the soundness, as a general principle, of taking the casualties of the officers as an index of those of the rank and file.

² I say *curiously enough* because probably there was not a man in the army who had not, or would not have, overdriven his pack-animals at a pinch. According to Napier it was the pleading eyes of the poor creatures, sitting helplessly on their haunches and unable to move, that infuriated the British. One is tempted to speculate whether the soldiers would have been equally sentimental if the animals had worn blinkers. Mr. Oman places the scene of this occurrence at Miranda do Corvo, which would imply wanton cruelty on the part of the French ; but Napier, Grattan, Costello, and Kincaid all say that it was at Foz d'Arouce.

the Portuguese army was as deficient as ever, with the 1811. result that the British commissariat was obliged to March 16. supply Portuguese as well as British troops, and broke down for the moment under the strain.¹ Some of the divisions in fact had been only irregularly fed for three or four days past, and the men were growing weak from privation. Moreover, there were other considerations which induced the British commander to abate the pressure of his pursuit. In the first place the restoration of the bridge over the flooded Ceira compelled some appreciable delay; and in the second it was certain that Massena, having been headed off from the Mondego, would be obliged to continue his retreat on pain of starvation, so that the principal object of the British advance from before Santarem had been accomplished. Lastly, on the night of the 13th-14th, Wellington had received the unexpected news of the fall of Badajoz, which materially altered the aspect of the general situation.² When he decided on the 9th of March to cancel his projected expedition against Soult, Wellington had left the Second Division and Hamilton's Portuguese near Abrantes, and had summoned Beresford to come to him and talk matters over. It will be remembered further that on the 14th he had sent Cole's division eastward towards Espinal, so that, when it had fulfilled its function of alarming Massena for his left, it might turn about and march southward by way of Abrantes into Alemtejo. Cole was now directed to turn southward accordingly, and de Grey's brigade of cavalry was ordered to join him, while Beresford made his way to Abrantes to take command of the entire force. It will presently be our duty to follow the fortunes of Beresford, but for the present it is more important to note that by these detachments Wellington reduced his army from forty-five thousand to thirty-eight thousand men. On the other hand, reinforcements sufficient to make a Seventh Division had landed

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 16th March 1811.

² *Ibid.* To Lord Wellesley, 16th March 1811.

1811. at Lisbon in the course of the past six weeks, and had March 16. nearly reached Santarem on their march to join the army. Moreover, Wellington was so well convinced that Massena must evacuate Portugal that he had already resolved to dismiss the Militia and Ordenançā of Lisbon to their homes.¹

Meanwhile at eight o'clock on the evening of the 15th Massena received, with such feelings as may be guessed, the news of Ney's mishap at Foz d'Arouce. He at once gave orders for Reynier to continue his retreat without delay towards Arganil on the Alva, about eight miles east and south of Ponte da Murcella, and for the Eighth Corps to begin its march two hours later to the heights which command the lower reaches of the river. Ney was in due time to take up a position between them, but for the present he was left in his place by the Ceira, Massena having been apprised that the bridge of Ponte da Murcella would not be ready until the 17th. The Duke of Elchingen asked for nothing better than for a chance to revenge himself upon Wellington, for he was very sore over his late reverse; indeed he had vented his spleen upon the unfortunate general, Lamotte, by depriving him of his brigade for a fault that was entirely the Marshal's own. The British, however, as we have seen, did not cross the Ceira, and in the course of the day Massena sent his wounded and his train across the Alva by a ford, drawing the Eighth and Second Corps close to the river, with the Sixth Corps in rear at San Miguel de Poiares. The bridge being repaired by evening, the Eighth Corps

March 17. crossed it at two o'clock in the morning of the 17th, and, turning north-westward, took up a position towards the confluence of the Alva with the Mondego, while Reynier with the Second Corps, striking eastward, passed the river some six miles higher up at the ford of Sarzedo, and posted his troops upon the heights about that village, with a detachment farther up the river and on the southern bank at Arganil. Last of all Ney

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Beresford, 20th March 1811.

crossed the bridge some hours later, and established 1811. himself along the high ground commanding the bridge March 17. towards Lecinta da Carvalha and beyond. Of the cavalry, Montbrun's division watched the lower reaches of the Alva, while that belonging to the Eighth Corps guarded the fords above Arganil. Massena, in fact, baffled in his hope of holding the line of the Mondego, was resolved to hold the not less defensible course of the Alva, and had given his generals to understand that he would stand fast at least during the whole of the 18th. But as usual his subordinates would not serve him faithfully. This time Reynier was the man in fault, for, though ordered to close in to his right so as to protect Ney's left flank, he remained resolutely at Sarzedo, leaving a gap of some three miles between the centre and the left of Massena's line of defence.

At dawn on the 17th Wellington renewed the pursuit in torrents of rain, throwing his army across the Ceira by sundry bridges and fords; and the advanced guard finally halted two miles short of Ponte da Murcella, having seen nothing of the enemy except Ney's picquet on the south side of the river. Meanwhile Massena, having discovered the faultiness of his array, had again bidden Reynier to close up to his right, but with no further result than to make him move farther north to Avellal da Cima, instead of farther west. Wellington, for his part, gave instructions in the course of the night that Hawker's brigade of cavalry and the First, Third and Fifth Divisions should move eastward by way of Forcado and the ridge of the Serra da Quiteria, so as to turn the enemy's left at Pombeiro and Arganil, while the remainder of the army should hold the French in front before Ponte da Murcella. The morning was foggy, and when at eight o'clock the skirmishers of the Light Division drove Ney's outlying picquet across the river, the Marshal, mistrusting the situation, blew up the bridge. An hour or two later, when the mist began to clear, the Light and Sixth Divisions deployed in rear of the skirmishers, the guns of the horse-artillery opened

1811. fire at long range, and Ney, becoming exceedingly anxious, pressed Massena to retreat. The French Commander-in-Chief, not less disturbed, sent aide-de-camps in all directions to find Reynier's Corps, but could discover only a single battalion of it moving northward to join its main body. The truth is that, when towards noon the lifting fog had revealed to Reynier the heads of the British columns on the Serra da Quiteria, he had withdrawn the whole of his corps, with the exception of the one battalion, to Moita, and had sent word to his chief that he had better do likewise with the rest of the army. "Really his conduct is frightful," wrote Massena with just indignation; but there was no time for criticism. The British had reached the ford of Pombeiro, and there were no troops there to prevent them from crossing it. Massena sent orders to Junot to fall back at once to Moita, and Ney with some precipitation withdrew his troops to the same point.¹

¹ Mr. Oman, on the authority of Noel, not without support from Fririon, makes the retreat of Junot begin in the afternoon of the 17th, and mentions that he set off so hurriedly that he left all his foraging parties behind. Wellington also mentions that the enemy moved away a part of their army in the night, though he adds that it returned to Moita on the 18th. But on the other hand Koch says that Massena ordered one cavalry brigade only of Junot's Corps to Galizes in the night of the 17th, and he places the Second Corps ahead of all the rest on the evening of the 19th. Moreover, why should Junot have retreated hurriedly on the afternoon of the 17th? Because, according to Mr. Oman, Massena was aware of the march of three British divisions towards Pombeiro and Arganil. But though Massena (see his report to Berthier of 19th March) says indeed that Wellington had made a detachment to one of his flanks, he adds that he could not discover to which flank the movement was made, and that he imagined it to be towards the Mondego. Wellington made no such movement, though a false report of it reached Ney and was believed by him. Lastly, I can find no evidence that the British turning detachment marched to the eastward until the 18th. Koch, Napier, Wellington, and Stothard (who was in the turning detachment) are all agreed upon this point. Koch, it may be added, says distinctly that Massena gave all his generals orders to stand fast in their position throughout the 18th. Nevertheless the dates are so much confused in the various accounts that any one may be pardoned for going astray over them.

It remains to consider the question whether any considerable

On that night the French started upon the longest 1811. and most trying march which they had yet undertaken March 18. in the course of the retreat, the entire army being drawn out along the road that runs through the mountainous region by Galizes, Chamusca, and Gouvea to Celorico. The commandant of Junot's artillery has left a record of the weariness of this journey of twenty-five hours with tired horses and overloaded waggons. The Ninth Corps, which had waited by Massena's entreaty at Torrozello, some eight miles north-east of Galizes, led the way, followed in succession by the Second, Eighth, and Sixth Corps ; and by the evening of the 19th the March 19. Ninth Corps was at Pinhancos,¹ the Eighth midway between it and the Second, which lay at Sandomil and Saragoça, and the head of the Sixth at Chamusca. A heavy fog prevented the British from starting early on the 19th, and, when night fell, the Fifth Division had not yet crossed the Alva ; but at Ponte da Murcella the Staff Corps threw a bridge over the river during the night, and enabled the Light Division to follow the cavalry in pursuit. Whether in consequence of orders or not, the mounted troops showed no great energy, for it was two o'clock in the afternoon before they really pushed on, in obedience to Wellington's commands.² Even so, however, they picked up from six to eight hundred prisoners,³ some of them sick, but a great

body of the turning detachment crossed the Alva on the 18th. Mr. Oman attributes this decisive movement, on the authority of Stothard, to the First Division. But this must be a slip, for Stothard says that the Guards did not cross the Alva until the evening of the 19th, and he mentions also that both the Third and Fifth Divisions were still on the south bank of that river on the 19th.

¹ Koch says that it was the Second Corps, and Fririon the Eighth Corps that reached Pinhancos ; but Koch immediately afterwards assigns a different position both to Reynier and to Junot. Pinhancos is at least fifteen miles from Galizes, and eleven more from Moita.

² Tomkinson, p. 87.

³ Wellington (to Beresford, 20th March) says 600 ; Simmons and Napier, among others, give the larger figure.

1811. many whole, for, in the expectation of a halt behind March 19. the Alva, the French soldiers had been scattered in all directions to find food and forage. By this time bread had again failed the British, though there was abundance of cattle captured from the enemy ; and on this day Wellington halted the bulk of the army at Moita, leaving the continuance of the chase to the cavalry and the Light Division only, with the Third and Sixth Divisions in support.

Meanwhile the French, having gained a long start, March 20. made good way towards their goal. On the 20th the Ninth Corps arrived at Celorico, and found the two brigades of Claparède in occupation of Guarda and Belmonte ; Montbrun's cavalry advanced to Carrapichana and reconnoitred the road to Fornos, where the bridge was found to be broken down and guarded by Trant's militia ; Junot reached Villa Cortes ; Reynier turned for a time into the southern road by Cea to Gouvea ; and Ney's head-quarters were at Vinho, with his extreme rear-guard at Cea. In the evening this last party—two battalions and a regiment of hussars—was overtaken by Slade's brigade of cavalry, but that General refused to attack without infantry and artillery, and, by the time that these had come up, the enemy had disappeared. A squadron of German hussars, however, captured on this day under cover of the fog four officers and five hundred and twenty infantry, besides a few oxen and horses and March 21. twelve hundred sheep.¹ On the 21st the advanced cavalry of the British reached Vinho, and the infantry Pinhancos, and with a final capture of several droves of stragglers the first stage of the pursuit came to an end, March 22. for on the 22nd Massena called a halt. On that day the Second Corps joined Claparède at Guarda ; Junot's Corps was a little in rear of Celorico, and Ney's was echeloned from the village along the road westward to Carrapichana. On the British side Arentschild's and Slade's brigades of British cavalry halted about Villa Cortes ; the Light Division joined them at Mello on

¹ Beamish, i. 322-323.

the 23rd ; Picton's division was close behind ; and the 1811. rest of the army remained halted in rear.

March.

Massena was now within about twenty-five miles of Almeida, and about sixty from Ciudad Rodrigo ; and in his last letters to Berthier on the 19th he had announced his intention of falling back to these places, in order to refresh his troops after all their fatigues and privations. On the 21st, however, he issued orders to his generals that he should halt for two or three days ; and, when Ney indignantly protested against this delay, Massena answered that it was necessary, for he had decided to canton the army in the neighbourhood of Coria and Plasencia, apparently with the idea of invading Portugal by the line of the Tagus. He explained that the districts of Valladolid were now required for the support of Bessières's Army of the North, and could no longer be drawn upon for the support of the Army of Portugal. Of all the strange doings of Massena in this retreat, this order was the most remarkable. His troops were utterly exhausted and demoralised by hardship and discouragement, and their self-respect was undermined by long continuance in rags and uncleanness. During the retreat they had been guilty of every kind of outrage upon the inhabitants, wanton murder, wanton destruction, pillage, and arson ; and the officers had not been the least of the offenders. Hundreds, nay thousands, had dropped out of the ranks, either to be carried miserably onward by overladen beasts, or to fall into the power of the British, or to perish in torment at the hands of the exasperated Portuguese. The leaders of corps had been foremost in indiscipline, hoping thereby to hasten the army's return to Spain ; and every man was crying out, not without great excuse, for a little rest and a little regular food before beginning work again. Moreover, the French soldiers had no shoes to their feet ; the transport had almost ceased to exist ; ammunition was very scanty ; and the artillery, to judge by the state of the Eighth Corps, had lost three-fourths of its horses

1811. and wheeled vehicles.¹ Yet Massena actually proposed March. to lead such an army, so equipped, over, say, one hundred miles of rugged, mountainous and barren country, into a district which both French and British knew by experience to be hopelessly exhausted.

His motives, as an eminent historian² has suggested, may have been to assert his authority and to prove that, whatever his misfortunes, his resolution was unshaken. His biographer suggests that he was influenced by knowledge of the facts that British officers, returning from the Peninsula to England, had given a despairing account of the situation, and that Wellington had just received letters from the Government condemning the excessive expense of the war. In any case the result of Massena's action was to provoke a discontent which very nearly amounted to open mutiny. A large party in the army urged Ney to depose the Prince of Essling and to assume command in his place ; and though the Duke of Elchingen stopped short of this extreme measure, he went to every other length of insubordination. Within four hours during the afternoon of the 22nd he sent Massena three letters of remonstrance : the first fairly moderate ; the second setting forth his arguments, which were very just, against his chief's orders, and declaring that unless these last were approved by the Emperor, the Sixth Corps would not obey them ; and the third in counterblast to Massena's positive written commands, announcing that he should withdraw his corps to Almeida on the morrow. This brought matters to a climax. Massena peremptorily bade Ney to retire at once to Valladolid, there to await the Emperor's pleasure, directed the officers of the Sixth Corps to obey no more orders from their late commander, and installed Loison as chief in his place. Ney replied that Massena had no right to take his

¹ Return of the artillery of the 8th Corps given by Noel, 15th September 1810 : 142 gun-carriages, waggons, etc., 891 draught-horses ; 4th April 1811 : 49 gun-carriages, waggons, etc., 182 draught-horses.

² Oman, iv. 176.

corps from him ; "but," he added, "if the generals of 1811. the Sixth Corps obey you, I will withdraw to Spain." Evidently he had counted, though mistakenly, upon support from his subordinates. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 23rd he again informed Massena March 23. that he would retain his command, to which the Prince of Essling replied by ordering Loison to move the Sixth Corps to Celorico. Finally at half-past ten Ney sent his sixth and last letter, asking for positive orders to betake himself to Spain, which Massena furnished on the spot. Ney therefore quitted the army, followed by the bitter lamentations of the Sixth Corps.

This unedifying episode was hardly ended before Massena found himself involved in a similar wrangle with d'Erlon. The change of circumstances, urged that officer, rendered obsolete all former orders of the Emperor to the Ninth Corps, and he should therefore draw back his troops towards Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca. Moreover, being as good as his word, he marched at once to the eastward of Ciudad Rodrigo with Conroux's division, and recalled that of Claparède from Guarda. None the less Massena pursued his preparations unmoved. He sent his sick, lame, and wounded to his base, reduced his guns to six for each division, throwing the remainder into Almeida, and took a number of Reynier's teams to complete those of the Sixth and Eighth Corps. Even without the Ninth Corps he had still close upon forty thousand men and nearly six thousand draught-horses,¹ and by the 24th March 24. all were fairly started upon the new campaign. On that day the Second Corps, having moved along three parallel tracks, lay at Belmonte, Sortelha, Pousa Falle, and Aguas Bellas ; the Eighth Corps was at Guarda ; and the Sixth a little to north of it. On the 25th March 25. Reynier proceeded southward over terrible ground to Valle de Lobo ; Junot, leaving his guns at Guarda, marched to Belmonte ; and the three divisions of the Sixth Corps were echeloned along twelve miles of road

¹ Return in Koch, vii. 583.

1811. from Freixedas south-westward to Guarda. On the March 26. 26th the Sixth Corps closed up to Guarda, the Eighth made wide reconnaissances from Belmonte, and the Second stuck fast on the way to Penamacor. With unconscious irony Massena had bidden Reynier take advantage of his halt "to collect grain and bake bread and biscuit," orders which could not have been more impossible of execution in the middle of the Sahara. Hating the Marshal with all his soul,¹ but warned by the fate of Ney, Reynier answered by a reasoned demonstration that provisions were not to be found between Guarda and Plasencia, and that, even if the army were to reach the Tagus, that river, owing to the destruction of the bridges, could be crossed only by a single ford, which was impassable when the water was high. Junot at the same time represented that he was obliged to keep his troops dangerously dispersed, because, if concentrated, they would die of starvation. Reynier's report was confirmed by the ablest of the French commissaries, and Massena, though deeply distrustful and suspicious, realised that his wild project must be abandoned.

Meanwhile bad news from other quarters furnished him both with new reasons and with valid excuses for this course. D'Erlon reported that there were only fifteen days' provisions in Almeida and not much more in Ciudad Rodrigo, and entreated him to return and shield these two places until they could be revictualled. General Brennier also represented from Almeida itself that he would need protection while withdrawing from the fortress the mass of artillery that had been stored March 28. there. Accordingly on the 28th Massena despatched orders for the Second Corps to move north-eastward to Sabugal and Valmourisco, and to hold that position till the Eighth Corps from Belmonte should come up behind it; while the bulk of the Sixth Corps was to stand fast at Guarda, with one division pushed down to Adão, some seven miles to south-eastward on the road to Sabugal.

¹ See Napier, iv. 482.

Massena himself shifted his head-quarters to Pega, 1811. between Adão and Valmourisco ; and the whole move- March 23. ment was designed to end in quiet retirement behind the line of the Coa.

Now, however, Wellington suddenly stepped in and disturbed Massena's plans. For five days the main body of the British army had remained halted at Moita, awaiting the arrival of supplies from a new dépôt at Coimbra,¹ and never doubting but that the French had made good their retreat to the Spanish frontier. On the 24th Slade, who commanded the British cavalry at March 24. the front, ascertained that the enemy had left Celorico, but on the 25th lost, apparently, all touch with them ; March 25. and it was precisely upon that day that the main body resumed its march, halting at dusk of the 26th at the March 26. villages just in rear of the advanced divisions, with head-quarters at Gouvea. On the same evening a patrol of the Sixteenth Light Dragoons and Royals encountered a small French detachment of cavalry between Alverca and Guarda, and took thirty-eight prisoners ;² and, since these belonged to the Sixth Corps, the natural inference was that they were covering the retreat of that corps either to Pinhel or to Almeida, more especially as d'Erlon's Corps had already been traced on its way to the latter place. Yet reconnaissance on the road to Guarda had shown that the French were there in considerable force ; and, in order to move them out of that position, Wellington closed up his army and March 27. marshalled it along a front of some fifteen miles, running nearly due north and south. On the extreme left the Portuguese levies of Trant and Wilson occupied the space from Povoa do Conselho to Maçal da Ribeira ; and the British cavalry covered the next interval from Maçal do Chão to Lageoza. The Light Division was likewise about Maçal do Chão, and the Sixth Division about Lageoza, the latter communicating on its right

¹ The Commissariat officers did not reach Coimbra till the 21st, *Journal of an Officer in the Commissariat*, p. 44.

² Tomkinson says nineteen ; Wellington says thirty-eight.

1811. with the Third Division, which was pushed into the mountains by Prados and Mizarella. The First and Fifth Divisions were held in support of the Third and Sixth, and in rear of all the Seventh Division, but recently formed and still incomplete,¹ was brought up to Pinhancos.

The decisive movements were put off for one day, March 29. and on the 29th the whole army was set in motion. Trant's and Wilson's Portuguese were directed to observe the enemy towards Frexidas and Pinhel ; the Light Division was to advance upon Guarda from the north by Rocamonde, and take post on the heights from two to three miles from the town ; the Sixth Division was to move south-eastwards by Sobral da Serra and Cavadoude, and take post likewise on the heights before the town ; while the left of the Third Division was to advance by Ponte de Faya through Cuba, and its centre and right by Massainhade, Corugeira, and Porcas direct upon Guarda from the west. Anson's cavalry and Bull's battery of horse-artillery were to accompany the Light Division, while a battery of mountain-guns followed Picton. The Fifth Division and Hawker's brigade of horse were to be in reserve about Mizarella ; and the First Division was to move up to Celorico.

The manœuvres appear to have been not quite so well executed as concerted, but fully served their purpose. Picton coming up at nine o'clock in the morning, established himself in a strong position on the left rear of the French and within four hundred yards of their head-quarters, where he waited for two hours before the other British troops reached the spot. Yet Loison, who had fifteen thousand infantry present, made no attempt to attack him ; and indeed this General had so far neglected the most ordinary precautions that, but for a chance visit from the chief of Massena's staff, he

¹ It consisted at this time of the 51st, 85th, Chasseurs Britanniques, Brunswick Oels, and five Portuguese battalions, the whole under command of General Houston.

would have been caught completely by surprise with 1811. only one battalion on the south of the town, and with March 29. the brigade to which it belonged in a most dangerous situation. Awaking to his danger, he lost his head, and without attempting resistance drew off his troops, who were cooking their dinners, in great haste to south-eastward upon Pega and Rapoula. The British infantry was unable to overtake them, though two squadrons of British cavalry, which followed them in pursuit, captured from two or three hundred men, chiefly foragers who had not been able to rejoin their corps. But the French rear-guard was too steady and firm to permit further molestation.

On the next morning Massena's position was March 30. anything but pleasant. Two of his corps, the Sixth and Second, were indeed more or less together between Marmeiro and Sabugal ; but the Eighth was still at Belmonte, in so rough a country as to be two marches distant, though not more than thirteen miles, as the crow flies, from Sabugal. Wellington, however, knew that Reynier was at the place last named, and being convinced that he himself had driven at least two corps from Guarda, made no enquiry as to the whereabouts of Junot. In the course of the day Slade with the brigades of Arentschild and Hawker, and two batteries of horse-artillery, followed up the two retreating columns of the Sixth Corps; but, being timid and unenterprising in his pursuit, he inflicted little damage on the enemy, who crossed the Coa in safety before dark. On that day Junot, using vile mountain roads, reached Urgeira, and on the morrow passed through Sabugal to Alfaiates, where his famished and exhausted men at last returned to regular supplies of food. Massena then cantoned the entire army in two lines behind the Coa ; the Sixth Corps at Vallongo, Villar Maior, and Ruvina ; the Eighth about Alfaiates, where he fixed his headquarters ; and Reynier's at Sabugal. At this last point the river, which so far has run from east to west, makes a sudden bend and flows from south to north, so that

1811. the Second Corps was thus thrown back *en potence* at March 30. right angles to the rest of the line. The distance from Villar Maior to Sabugal, as the crow flies, is twelve miles ; and to hold this space Massena had still from thirty-six to thirty-seven thousand men,¹ exclusive of the Ninth Corps, which remained about Almeida.

Upon realising that the Marshal had again formed a front to bar his pursuit, Wellington in his turn took measures to bring forward his entire army. Want of supplies delayed the movement for a day ; but the April 1-2. Light Division marched to Adão on the 1st of April, and on the 2nd the remaining divisions were brought forward ready for a stroke upon the morrow. Wellington had now about thirty-eight thousand men under his hand ; for, to counterbalance the heavy losses of the Portuguese owing to the inefficiency of the Portuguese Commissariat, he had received, over and above the British battalions of the Seventh Division, three more which were distributed among the Third and Sixth and Light Divisions.² On that night orders were issued for an attack upon the following day. The Light Division was to ford the river about two miles above Sabugal, and send Hawker's brigade of the Royals and Fourteenth Light Dragoons to a ford still higher up, whence those two regiments would move round the enemy's left flank and take post above the village of Torre, upon a hill which commanded the road of Reynier's retreat to Alfaiates. The general tenour of the instructions was that a wide circuit would be in all circumstances more desirable for these troops than a narrow one. The Third Division was also to pass the river a mile above Sabugal at a ford by the chapel of Nossa Senhora

¹ This is of course exclusive of the Ninth Corps. The effective strength of the Second, Sixth, and Eighth Corps on April 1 was 39,905 of all ranks, but Montbrun's Reserve Cavalry, 2395 strong, being ruined by the retreat, had been sent back to the Agueda to recruit. Koch, vii. 582-583.

² 2/88th for Third Division, 1/36th for Sixth Division, 2/52nd for Light Division. These appear to have reached their divisions on the 25th of March.

da Graça ; while the First and Fifth Divisions were 1811. massed by the road between Pega and Sabugal, and the April 2. Sixth was posted at Martin de Pega, ready to cross the river at a ford above Rapoula and deliver an assault in front. These two last divisions were ordered not to force an entry into Sabugal, until the enemy had begun to withdraw owing to pressure of the Third and Light Divisions upon their flank and rear. Lastly the Seventh Division was stationed at Cerdeira, opposite Loison's right, with a battalion in advance to watch the bridge of Sequeiras, a little above Villar Maior.

Far to the north, Trant and Wilson were likewise directed to engage the attention of d'Erlon. Thus the general design was to alarm two of Massena's Corps with two out of six British divisions, and crush the third—Reynier's—Corps with the remaining four. Since the river, though running between steep banks, was narrow and offered frequent fords, especially on the upper waters, there seemed to be no reason why the Third and Light Divisions should not accomplish their task with success.

Reynier on his side had noticed the multiplication of camp-fires on his front during the evening of the 2nd, and had asked Massena for instructions. Massena was at first disinclined to believe in the probability of an attack by Wellington ; but finally at about two o'clock April 3. in the morning of the 3rd he ordered the artillery of the Second Corps to retire to Alfaiaates, and intimated to Reynier that he might as well take his whole corps to that position. Reynier, however, decided that he would stay where he was until nightfall, preferring to retreat under cover of darkness ; but he sent out a regiment of dragoons to the south at a very early hour, and posted parties of voltigeurs to watch the ford above Sabugal.

The morning of the 3rd of April broke in mist and rain, the fog constantly rising in one place or another, and as constantly thickening again.¹ Between nine

¹ This is plain from the diversity of accounts as to the moment when the fog lifted, and is what one would expect in such a country.

1811, and ten o'clock advanced parties of the British horse, April 3, having evidently crossed the water at Quadrazaes, entered the road between Souto and Alfaiates, and presently discovered that the French artillery was following the same route a little in rear of them. Some kind of a contest appears to have ensued, which resulted in the flight of some of the French drivers back to camp ; but the British patrols must have been driven off, for none of the French guns were taken, and the entire train was presently stopped and sent round to Alfaiates by way of Bouca Farinha and Nave. It was the fugitive drivers who brought to Reynier the first warning of the coming storm, a warning which half an hour or so later was confirmed by the appearance of a column of red-coats by one of the fords of the Coa.

Turning now to the British side, it should seem that Erskine, in spite of the fog, started betimes with the cavalry and the Light Division for the upper fords of the river. Herein no doubt he did right. His column had a greater distance to traverse than any other ; his turning movement was the most important of the whole operation ; and on high ground, such as the hills behind Sabugal, which rise to over two thousand feet, wet foggy mornings are the rule rather than the exception. He himself accompanied the cavalry, which once again was reasonable, seeing that the horse formed the extreme outward margin of the turning column ; and it appears that he intended the whole of the Light Division to follow him, for the second brigade under General Drummond certainly did so until it reached its destined crossing-place, and remained within his control all day.¹ By some culpable

¹ It is very difficult to make out what happened on this day. Wellington, writing to Beresford (4th April), says that the whole of the Light Division crossed by the same ford (that taken by Beckwith), and the cavalry also. He adds that from a hill above Sabugal he could see every movement on both sides, though he admits that there was a rain-storm which reminded him of the fogs on Bussaco. But by the account of Hopkins of the 43rd neither guns nor cavalry could easily have crossed by the same ford as Beckwith, where

neglect, however, on the part of Erskine or of his staff, 1811. no orders were given to the first brigade to move with April 3, the rest of the division ; and the natural consequence was that its commander, Colonel Beckwith, kept it halted close to its quarters. After a time, but not so soon as should with proper care have been the case, the absence of the first brigade was discovered, and an aide-de-camp galloping back to Beckwith asked him with some temper why he had not marched to his appointed place ; whereupon the Colonel, without asking further questions, led away his brigade,¹ consisting of the Forty-third and four companies of the Ninety-fifth, up the river. Whether he had a guide or not is doubtful, but certain it is that he selected a ford about four miles above Sabugal, which his men crossed with some difficulty armpit-deep under the fire

the river was deep and swollen and the opposite bank was “steep and covered with thick underwood.” Napier says that the 2nd brigade crossed higher up, and the cavalry also ; and Wyld’s *Atlas* shows the cavalry crossing far above the infantry. Kincaid (*Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*) says that one brigade of cavalry started at the same time with Beckwith’s, but says nothing of its crossing-place. Tomkinson says that the Light Division and cavalry crossed the river with little difficulty (hardly possible at Beckwith’s ford) and that, while the fight was proceeding, the cavalry was far to the right. This is confirmed by Wellington, who says that they went too far to the right. Of course they could have gone where they did had they crossed by Beckwith’s ford ; but the appearance of their patrols at Souto much earlier in the day points to a crossing much higher up. According to the account of Hopkins it was raining hard as Beckwith crossed the river, so that Wellington probably could not see the brigades at all. I should add that the distances shown on Wyld’s map are hopelessly incompatible with the modern Portuguese survey, which no doubt is the more correct.

¹ By right there should have been three companies of the 3rd Caçadores with him, and indeed Wellington in his despatch says that these companies were present. But Napier and Fergusson, both of the 43rd, say that they were absent ; and not one single account of the seven that have come down to us from officers of the 43rd and 95th says one word about Caçadores. Moreover, the casualties of all the Portuguese present for the whole day did not exceed ten. I believe therefore that these three companies were not with Beckwith.

1811. of a French picquet. The little party of the enemy April 3. retired after giving the alarm ; and the British scrambled through dense underwood to the top of a hill over-hanging the water, where the Forty-third halted for a time, while the Rifles, turning half-left, followed in skirmishing order on the track of the retreating picquet.

Reynier, on hearing that the British were approaching the river, had lost no time in forming a front to his left, that is to say to southward, and had drawn up Sarrut's brigade of the 2nd and 36th, each of three battalions and jointly some twenty-seven hundred strong, upon a plateau to which the tracks from the upper fords converged. He had at the same time summoned Heudelet's brigade and asked General Pierre Soult to send cavalry to protect his left flank. Simultaneously General Merle led the remaining regiment of his division, the 4th Light, about thirteen hundred strong, further to the south, presumably to hold an advanced position.¹ Beckwith, pressing on, presently struck against Merle's skirmishing line and drove it back upon the main body which, being formed in columns of double companies, offered a good mark. After inflicting severe loss the Rifles, overpowered by superior fire, fell back upon the Forty-third, which was advancing to their support ; and, as nothing could be seen of the enemy's position, Beckwith galloped off to the left to reconnoitre. He was still absent when the Forty-third suddenly perceived the 4th Light looming on the heights above them ; but Colonel Patrickson without hesitation threw the regiment into the attack, and after a sharp exchange of volleys ordered his men to charge. Thereupon the French, much shaken by the fire, gave way, and ran down from the

¹ I follow Mr. Oman in accepting this statement as to Merle's doings from Braquehay's *Le Général Merle* ; but it is to be noticed that much of Braquehay's account is word for word the same as Koch's ; that Koch declared Sarrut to have been in command of Merle's division ; and that no French account of the action mentions the name of Merle.

plateau over the lower ground beyond it to the next eminence, with the British in hot pursuit.

April 3.

Meanwhile, during a momentary lifting of the clouds just before the charge, Captain Hopkins, commanding the right flank company of the Forty-third, had perceived a French column at a distance moving towards the right flank and rear of the British line. Instantly grasping the danger, he led his company¹ to an eminence half a mile distant, which commanded the approach of the hostile troops, and drew his men up on the summit. The French column, which was composed of the first brigade of Heudelet's division, the 17th Light and 70th of the Line, and had been called up from Alfaiates,² thereupon halted, and the commander detached a body of troops against the little band of Hopkins on the hill. Hopkins reserved his fire until the French were within close range, and then gave them a volley which sent them reeling down to the plain in confusion. They rallied and advanced again, but were once more repulsed and retired to a greater distance.³ Meanwhile the remainder of Beckwith's brigade, advancing, reached the foot of the plateau, where Sarrut's brigade was drawn up; and a momentary glimpse of light seems to have revealed to Beckwith how great were the odds against him. None the less he appears to have opened his attack,⁴ until a heavy shower at the moment prevented all firing, when he was compelled to fall back, and to resume his position on the hill from which he had driven Merle at his first onset.

¹ He had also a few men of No. 2 Company, making about 100 bayonets in all.

² As I understand Fririon, the whole of Heudelet's division approached by the road from Alfaiates, which explains the account given by Hopkins in Levinge's *Hist. of the 43rd*.

³ This accounts in some measure for Merle's statement that Heudelet was seconding the 4th Light, and "was giving way under the attack of the British."

⁴ One account, however, says that he cautiously withdrew to his original position.

1811. This movement brought the brigade back into closer April 3. touch with Hopkins, and Beckwith seized the moment to gallop up to that officer and tell him, with handsome commendations, that he might act as he thought best. Then the fighting became more than ever confused. Sarrut opened fire from two howitzers which had come up with Heudelet's troops, pushed his sharp-shooters forward to a stone wall which lay in front of Beckwith's position, and under the combined fire of musketry and artillery launched three strong columns¹ to the attack against Beckwith, while another body prepared to assault Hopkins. Both sides were furiously excited ; the gallant French officers, far in advance of their men, shouting and gesticulating madly, while the drums beat the *pas de charge* ; the British waiting eagerly but coolly for the word which should let them loose. Beckwith and Hopkins both held their fire until the enemy were within close range, shattered the columns with a few terrible volleys, and then cheered their men on to the charge. Down the declivity rolled the French in disorder, with the Forty-third and Rifles hard at their heels ; and the wave of pursuit could not be checked until it had swept over the howitzer and left it in the hands of the British. It was theirs only for a moment. Pierre Soult had by this time brought up his cavalry ; and, hurling his troopers upon Beckwith's disordered infantry, he chased them headlong back to their hill. The British, however, rallied behind the wall which had lately sheltered their enemies, and renewed the fight. With superb bravery the French dragoons galloped up to this wall, pistol in hand, and were in the act of firing over it when a volley cut them down almost to a man. Under cover of their attack a strong body of French infantry advanced again to recover the lost howitzer, but was driven back by the fire of the British ; and after more futile efforts on both sides, the one to rescue,

¹ These must have been composed of the 2nd Light, 36th Line, and either one of Heudelet's regiments or the rallied 4th Light ; in all, not far from four thousand men.

the other to secure the trophy, British and French 1811.
ensconced themselves upon either side of it, each party April 3.
resolved that, come what might, the other should not
possess it.

Throughout this wild struggle of rushing and excited men the tall figure of Beckwith was conspicuous, his face streaming with blood from a superficial wound in the head, but his calmness unmoved and his spirit undaunted by the fearful odds against him. So much scattered were his men that twice at least he led no more than two companies of the Forty-third to the charge, and twice, finding hostile columns in front and on both flanks, was forced to bring them back. He gave no regular word of command, but signified his wishes by running conversation : "Now, my lads, we'll just go back a little, if you please." "No, I don't mean that (as the men began to run), we are in no hurry—we'll just walk quietly back, and you can give them a shot as you go." Then, when the men had reached their old position on the hill, "Now, my men, this will do—let us show them our teeth again"; and shaking his fist in the face of the advancing columns, he dared them to come on. Thus it was that the fight was maintained for a full hour, a fight which has hardly a parallel in our military annals except that of Inkermann.

Help, however, was at hand. Some time earlier Colonel Elley, staff-officer of the cavalry division, had ridden up to Hopkins, but had met his request for reinforcements with a shake of the head. Heudelet's second brigade was close by, and the French were evidently preparing for a fresh attack, when the leading regiment of Drummond's brigade—the newly-arrived second battalion of the Fifty-second—at last came up level with Hopkins. Acting upon his advice the Colonel formed the Fifty-second on the right of Hopkins's company, and the whole then advanced in skirmishing order, plunging into a wood before them amid unabated rain. The French opposed to them

1811. thereupon fell back, skirmishing likewise, towards the April 3. main body which was opposed to Beckwith ; but mingling some dragoons with their sharp-shooters they succeeded not only in shaking the Forty-third, but actually caused a panic among the Fifty-second, which narrowly missed losing one of its colours. Meanwhile the rest of Drummond's brigade, together with a couple of guns, formed up in second line to the rear of Beckwith's men ; and then a short lifting of the mist appears to have shown Reynier his numerical superiority, for he now threw a part of his force against the British left flank. He was too late. Picton's division had by this time reached the Coa ; and the French detachments, which were watching that part of the river, were so careless that they allowed the riflemen of the Sixtieth to clamber up the bank unseen within a few yards of them. They were therefore quickly dispersed ; Picton deployed as he advanced ; and the Fifth Fusiliers, coming upon the flank of the French troops that were themselves out-flanking Beckwith's left, dashed them off the field with heavy loss. The Fifth Division now pressed over the bridge to Sabugal ; and it would have gone hard with Reynier had not the intermittent rain at last gathered itself up for a final tremendous storm, which blotted his troops out of sight. Hastily forming a rear-guard of the 31st Light and 47th Line, which so far had been little engaged, he beat a hurried retreat in disorder but unmolested, for Wellington had issued commands for the British to halt. When the sky cleared, the French had gained a long start ; and, though a squadron or two of cavalry attempted pursuit and captured the private baggage of Reynier and Pierre Soult, they did little further damage. Thus the Second Corps, more by good luck than good management, retired safely to Alfaiates.¹

¹ The authorities for the fight of Sabugal are, on the French side, Koch's *Vie de Masséna* ; Braquehay's *Le Général Merle* ; Fririon's *Campagne de Portugal*. One and all are hopelessly confused and self-contradictory. The English accounts are to be found in

So ended the fight of Sabugal, "one of the most glorious," wrote Wellington, "that British troops were ever engaged in." An action fought in a fog, where the vision of the individual is even more than ordinarily restricted, must necessarily be obscure; and I have encountered none, with the possible exception of the battle of Turcoing, which is so difficult to follow. Two things, however, are certain: first, that Wellington's design miscarried; secondly, that Beckwith with a handful of men successfully withstood the onset of twice or thrice his own numbers. Hence a great deal of harsh criticism has been poured upon Erskine on the one side and upon Reynier on the other. As to Erskine, he was, as has been already told, of disordered brain; and his unpopularity with the Light Division and the cavalry doubtless prompted much of the hard language lavished on him by the members of both corps. Yet his blunders, so far as I can see, were confined to one, namely, that he allowed one of his brigades to be left behind. This beyond question was sufficiently serious, but it may very well have been the fault of his staff; and the mistake would hardly have occurred but for the fog. Moreover, it is by no means clear that Erskine was the only divisional leader who went astray, for Picton should assuredly have come on to the field earlier than he did. The truth is that the British generals, as their chief complained, had not yet mastered the art of regulating the march of their

Napier; Kincaid's *Random Shots*, and *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*; Verner, *British Rifleman*; Costello's *Adventures of a Soldier*; Sir Harry Smith's *Autobiography*; Donaldson's *Eventful Life of a Soldier*; Robinson's *Life of Picton*; Moorsom's *History of the 52nd*; Tomkinson's *Diary of a Cavalry Officer*; and, most important of all, Levinge's *History of the 43rd*.

I should be sorry to vouch for the correctness of the positions assigned to the various French troops, it being hopeless to attempt to reconcile the French accounts in this respect. My account differs not a little from that of Mr. Oman, chiefly because I have relied much on the narrative of Levinge, which he appears to have set aside or overlooked.

1811. divisions so as to execute uncertain movements punctually and with accuracy.¹ In respect of this action Wellington by implication blamed Erskine only, but whether upon a correct realisation of the facts may be doubted. His only general comment was, "These combinations for engagements do not answer unless one is on the spot to direct every trifling movement." Meanwhile Erskine gave the fullest credit to Beckwith,² whom Wellington commended greatly in his despatch. Beckwith, however, declared that so far as it was possible for a man in command of one company to decide an action, Hopkins had decided the combat of Sabugal.³

As to Reynier, it seems to me that he was reprehensibly rash in not taking Massena's advice and falling back upon Alfaiates before daylight. He had had greater experience of British troops than the majority of French generals and, however absurd and arrogant his opinion of Wellington, should have taken no liberties with them. But for the fog he would have paid dearly for his temerity. When once the combat was fairly engaged, it is difficult to judge of his actions, for there is no means of ascertaining how his troops were disposed. Napier blames him for throwing his battalions into the fight piecemeal; but it appears to me very doubtful whether they were sufficiently concentrated under his hand to be dealt with otherwise than as they were. It must be remembered that only at rare intervals could Reynier or his officers see anything of what was going forward. It is likely enough that whole regiments took wrong roads and went astray in a fashion which made them arrive not a little late at their appointed place. It is even more probable that those who took part in the fight frequently thought themselves isolated and overwhelmed by superior numbers, when in reality Beckwith's men lay at their mercy. As

¹ Wellington to Spencer, 20th March 1811.

² Kincaid, *Random Shots*, p. 172.

³ Levinge, *History of the 43rd*, p. 150.

to the technical blunder of assailing the British line with 1811.
heavy columns, that would certainly have been com- April 3.
mitted whatever the weather and whoever the French
general in command. Indeed, it may be doubted
whether the French troops, young and raw men for
the most part, would have attacked in any less solid
formation.

For the rest, the losses on the British side were absurdly small, not exceeding seventy killed and one hundred and forty-four wounded and missing ; and of that number nearly half of the casualties fell on the Forty-third, one-eighth on the Fifty-second, and one-tenth on Beckwith's four companies of Rifles. The French acknowledged a loss of seven hundred and sixty, including one hundred and eighty unwounded prisoners ;¹ to which total the 70th of the Line contributed nearly one-third, the 17th Light about one-fourth, Merle's division another third, and the cavalry and artillery the small remainder. Nevertheless, considering how sharp was the fighting, the casualties upon both sides were remarkably few. The French infantry, we are told, fought stubbornly, sticking their ramrods into the ground so as to maintain a rapid fire, while the gunners of the captured howitzer were killed and wounded almost to a man. Indeed one gallant fellow among them must have returned to his piece at the very last ; for he was killed by a round-shot, and it was not until late that the British guns came into action. Yet the French officers who fell numbered over sixty, which is generally good evidence that the men were unsteady. On a rainy day, when muskets were constantly missing fire, the French troops, trained to shock-action rather than missile-action, should have had the advantage apart from their superiority of numbers ; yet they failed to sweep even Hopkins's hundred men from the top of a hill. Evidently they were so far demoralised by long marauding, indiscipline, and discouragement

¹ Wellington states the number at 300. *Despatches.* To Liverpool, 8th April 1811.

1811. that they no longer trusted either their officers or April 3. themselves.

On the afternoon of the 3rd, Massena concentrated his three corps at Alfaiates, and at night continued his retreat ; the Second Corps falling back north-eastward eighteen or twenty miles to Fuentes de Oñoro ; the Sixth taking a more easterly course to Fuenteguinaldo, and the Eighth moving between the two to Campillo de Azava. On the 5th Reynier occupied Gallegos ; Junot, the villages of Carpio and Marialva ; and Loison the heights before Ciudad Rodrigo ; while Montbrun's dragoons were at El Bodon, and the Light Cavalry connected the Second Corps with the Sixth. Drouet therefore drew back Claparéde's division behind Almeida, while that of Conroux remained in rear at San Felices de los Gallegos.

April 4. Wellington meanwhile followed up the enemy on the 4th with his advanced corps only, provisions having again fallen short ; and the light cavalry crossed the Spanish frontier to Alamedilla, the first village with inhabitants in it that they had seen since they left Mafra on the 22nd of October 1809. On that day the Third Division encamped at Alfaiates, and the Light Division a little to east of them on the Spanish frontier, while the rear of the army was still at Sabugal. On the

April 5. 5th the Light Division was at Albergueria and the rear divisions at Nave ; and on the 6th the Light cavalry, pushing on by Nave de Haver to Villar Formoso, regained touch with the French at San Pedro, three miles further to the north. On this latter day Wellington shifted his head-quarters from Alfaiates to Villar Maior, little more than ten miles from Villar Formoso, and ordered Trant with his Portuguese Militia to sever the communications between Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo on the morrow, promising him assistance from his own army. Already on the 5th Trant had advanced within a mile and a half of Almeida, when the Coa rose in flood behind him, making retreat impossible. With some difficulty he built a rude

bridge, and was about to retire on the 6th, when 1811. Wellington's message reached him. Accordingly on April 6. the next day he pushed boldly forward, which was April 7. precisely what Claparède desired him to do, and found himself engaged with the French about Val de la Mulla. With raw militia matched against regular troops he seemed likely to come off badly, but at the critical moment six British squadrons and four guns of Bull's battery galloped up, forcing Claparède to an immediate retreat to the bridge of Barba del Puerco. The losses of the French in the action that followed were, according to their own account, under forty killed and wounded ; but a good many stragglers and isolated parties were captured, which raised the total to some three hundred. In consequence of Trant's raid not Claparède only but Reynier also drew back ; and by the next day the whole of the French army had retired April 8-11. behind the Agueda. Nor did the retrograde movement cease until on the 11th the army reached its base at Salamanca.

Here then Wellington had reached the end of his resources. North and east of him were two fortresses, Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, neither of which he could attack because he had not yet thought it advisable to disembark his siege-train.¹ He had some idea of reducing both of them by blockade, but the carelessness of Erskine enabled a convoy to enter Ciudad Rodrigo ; and for the moment he gave up all idea of keeping any number of British troops east of the Agueda. Almeida promised greater hope of success, for d'Erlon had been feeding his corps from its supplies, which were said, though falsely, to have been reduced very low. As we have seen, Napoleon had given orders for the fortress to be dismantled ; but it was still held by a small garrison, and as such might yet be the provoking cause of a great battle.

¹ It is too commonly said that the Government had not supplied him with a siege-train ; but that this is untrue is shown by *Wellington Desp.* To Admiral Berkeley, 20th March 1811.

1811. Wellington, however, hardly suspected this. He reckoned that Massena's campaign had cost the French forty-five thousand men, and that some months would elapse before he should see more of the Army of Portugal.¹

Herein he was deceived ; and yet Massena's losses had been enormous. Sober calculation cannot rate them at a higher number than twenty-five thousand, or thirty-eight per cent of his total force, of which number about two thousand had fallen in action, about eight thousand were prisoners, and the remainder had perished from sickness and hunger. The mortality among the French horses was rather higher in proportion than that among their men ; their waggons were reduced to a handful ; and the French army at large was without clothing, shoes or ammunition, divided, discouraged and demoralised. Few commanders have been more bitterly hated and more savagely reproached than Massena when his Portuguese campaign came to an end ; but none the less he had done wonders. The army entrusted to him was too small to drive the British into the sea ; yet by sheer ascendancy of will and tenacity of purpose he had held unwilling men and recalcitrant officers in position through weeks of misery and hardship, first before Torres Vedras and next at Santarem, hoping to wear down the courage of the British Government and to strengthen the hands of the British Opposition. When at length famine compelled him to retreat, he brought off his men with masterly skill, and kept them together, in spite of themselves and in spite of disobedient officers, throughout the dreary retreat from the Zezere to the Agueda. Twice, indeed, he had made grave mistakes ; first, when he had tried to march to the Tagus from Guarda, and secondly, when he stationed Reynier's Corps in isolation at Sabugal ; but in the latter case he had taken measures to correct the blunder, if Reynier

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 9th, to Beresford, 10th, 13th, 14th April 1811.

would have obeyed him. When it is remembered that 1811. his health and vigour were beginning to fail owing to years of fatigue and hardship, that the task set to him was distasteful to his army, and that he almost courted personal unpopularity by his churlish aloofness from his officers and his excessive attention to his mistress ; then it must, I think, be admitted that a man who, with all these defects and disadvantages, could still wring miracles of endurance out of the French soldier and always place him where his enemy least wanted to see him, was a very great commander.

Yet even greater was his adversary, whose difficulties had never been more formidable than in the five weeks from the 5th of March to the 7th of April. First and foremost he had been matched against such a master as Massena, whose subordinates, moreover, for all their disloyalty, were men of unequalled experience in the handling of large masses of troops and in the great operations of war. The best of the British generals were hardly their peers in this respect ; and many of the best—Hill, Cotton, Craufurd, Leith—were absent from the Army. Spencer, the second in command, though a good executive officer, was unfit for his place. “ He gives his opinion upon every subject,” wrote Wellington, “ changes it with the wind, and if any misfortune occurs, or the act recommended by him is disapproved of, there is no effort to be looked for from him.” Of Erskine’s shortcomings enough has already been said. Slade as a leader of cavalry was deplorable. He had had many opportunities of distinction during Massena’s retreat ; he had neglected every one ; and he was a byword for inefficiency throughout the army.¹ Hawker, who commanded a brigade under Slade, was not much better than his chief, and was objectionable in other respects.² Altogether

¹ See Tomkinson, pp. 98-99.

² I forbear to quote Wellington’s exact words in an unpublished letter to Liverpool of 25th June 1811, for they are not merely severe but scathing. *Wellington MSS.*

1811. the leading of brigades and divisions was unsatisfactory. "In the late operations," wrote Wellington, "I have been obliged to be general of cavalry and of the advanced guard, and leader of two or three columns, sometimes on the same day."

Then as the march proceeded, the condition of the unfortunate Portuguese troops, owing to the failing of the commissariat, had gone from bad to worse. "It is literally true," wrote Wellington, on the 16th of March, "that Pack's brigade and Ashworth's had nothing to eat for four days, although constantly marching or engaged with the enemy." "Three of Pack's brigade died of famine yesterday," he complained on the 18th, "and above one hundred and fifty have fallen out from weakness." "I am afraid," he continued on the 20th, "that I shall be obliged to throw into some valley all the Portuguese artillery, as the mules are so much reduced as to be quite unable to move the guns." "The Portuguese army are really falling off to an alarming degree," he wrote again on the 26th; "much time will elapse, and much care must be given to them to bring them about again. Some of the regiments which ought to be fourteen hundred men have not five hundred in the ranks." "I have been obliged to leave Pack behind," he resumed on the 30th; "he has had one day's rice and one day's Indian corn since I saw him twelve days ago. It is really a joke to talk of carrying on the war with these people." The lapse of ten days brought no improvement. "Pack's brigade," he wrote to Mr. Stuart on the 11th of April, "are still at Mangualde waiting for provisions. Colonel Pamplona's brigade are near Sabugal, plundering the country and starving; and the Visconde de Barbacena's brigade of cavalry I may safely say no longer exist in the form of cavalry. . . . I beg that you will inform the Portuguese Government that I propose by the next packet to inform His Majesty's Ministers that it is my opinion they cannot with propriety continue to risk a British army in this country unsupported by any

exertion of any description on the part of the 1811. Portuguese Government.¹

Lastly, he was once more deeply suspicious of his own masters in the British Cabinet. On the 20th of February Liverpool had again written to warn him that the expenditure upon the Peninsular war had risen to over nine millions in 1810, and that it would not be possible to continue it upon the same scale unless there were a prospect of bringing the contest to a speedy issue. It would therefore be necessary either to "reduce the scale of the exertion," or to withdraw from the contest altogether, which latter alternative was forbidden by considerations both of safety and of honour. This letter reached Wellington about the 20th of March, at a moment when he was much irritated by Imaz's disgraceful surrender of Badajoz. He answered it on the 23rd with studied moderation of tone, and with arguments upon financial points which were not very convincing because they were founded upon erroneous data ; but he concluded with some acrimony by adjuring the Government to consider that, if the British army were withdrawn from Portugal, Napoleon might accomplish the invasion of England. "Then indeed," he concluded, "would His Majesty's subjects discover what are the miseries of war, of which by the blessing of God they have hitherto no knowledge ; and the cultivation, the beauty and prosperity of the country, and the virtue and happiness of the inhabitants would be destroyed, whatever the result of the military operations. God forbid that I should be a witness, much less an actor, in such a scene." Beyond all question he wrote with deep feeling, shuddering at the idea that England might be overtaken by such calamities as he had seen during the past month in Portugal ; and the same vision of misery and desolation many years later compelled his unhesitating acceptance of political changes which in his heart

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 16th March ; to Beresford, 20th, 31st March ; to C. Stuart, 25th, 30th March ; 11th April 1811.

1811. he abominated. Yet strangely enough he seems not for a moment to have taken into account the Government's financial difficulties, which at that moment were reaching the acutest stage, but set down their caution to sheer disloyalty. In a letter of the 31st he repeated his official arguments in rather a petulant tone to his brother William,¹ and added to them, not for the first time, very harsh criticism of Liverpool. "Depend upon it," such were his words,² "that he does not like the concern and does not support it *con amore*." In the previous July Perceval had stated the whole situation to the General sympathetically but firmly, and entreated him to believe that Ministers were not "starving the great cause by false economy or mistaken views of what the nature of that cause required"; but still Wellington was jealous and distrustful. He requested Admiral Berkeley to keep the regimental baggage on board ship, and, when the Admiral protested, answered him somewhat curtly in the following words: "When I know that the present Ministers complain of the expense of the war in the Peninsula, that their opponents declare that they would withdraw the army, and that the conduct of the Spaniards affords a good reason for so doing, I consider it my duty not to be unprepared to obey such an order if I should receive it."

There is something very pathetic in such an utterance from such a man at such a time. He had thought out his military policy with admirable clearness and foresight; he had adhered to it through good report and evil report, though Massena had sacrificed thousands of men to shake it, with undaunted constancy and resolution; and he had vindicated its soundness by a triumph which was not the less great and thorough because it was the work of months and not of hours. He could issue with justifiable pride a proclamation to the Portuguese which rang from end to end of Europe. "The

¹ *Supp. Desp.* vii. 93-95.

² This passage is suppressed in the published despatches, but there is no harm in making it public now.

Portuguese nation are informed that the cruel enemy, 1811, who had invaded Portugal and devastated the country, have been obliged to evacuate it, after suffering great losses, and have retired behind the Agueda." Yet at the same moment he held himself in duty compelled to make every preparation to re-embark his army. In expecting that Perceval and Liverpool would throw him over, he did them great and unmerited injustice ; yet he was not perhaps without excuse ; for in England he knew that politically Perceval's administration had been born in weakness, nor could he put trust in its growing strength. It followed therefore that, even if Ministers were loyal to him, which quite erroneously he did not believe, they might be displaced on any day, and then the army would be withdrawn. He had required untold sacrifices of the Portuguese, and had seen the sufferings of the peasantry with his own eyes—their homesteads pillaged, their villages burned, their cattle slaughtered and stolen, men, women, and children maltreated, tortured, and starved. Yet on any day the order might come from some self-opinionated politician—some Grey or Whitbread or Tierney—that all this heroic endurance was to avail them nothing, that the protecting red-coats were to be re-embarked, and the country laid open to the oppression of such men as Massena and Loison. These are the difficulties which Parliamentary Government throws in the way of Generals. It is not surprising that Wellington for a time expressed himself now and again almost with peevishness to his brother. The true wonder, that which marks him out as indeed a great man, was that he never really lost patience nor courage nor hope.

There then for the present let us leave him, that we may follow the fortunes of Beresford on the Guadiana.

CHAPTER IV

1811. WELLINGTON's first orders for Beresford to march to the relief of Badajoz were issued, it will be remembered, on the 8th of March, but were countermanded on the following day owing to Massena's concentration of his army about Pombal. Thereupon the Fourth Division and Hoghton's brigade of the Second were recalled to join Wellington's main body, while the rest of Beresford's detachment remained about Abrantes. On the 12th Hoghton's brigade was again released ; and on

March 15. the 15th the Fourth Division, together with De Grey's brigade of dragoons, was, as has been already related, directed once more southward, while Beresford on the following morning left Wellington's camp to take up the command. But already on the 14th news had reached the Commander-in-Chief of the treacherous

March 18. surrender of Badajoz ; and accordingly on the 18th he sent word to Beresford that he had better march to Portalegre at once and attack Soult, who, by the latest intelligence, was moving upon Campo Maior. Remembering that Soult had been obliged to furnish garrisons for Badajoz and Olivenza, Wellington judged that the Marshal would be too weak to meet Beresford in the field and would probably fall back south of the Guadiana. He therefore empowered Sir William to follow the enemy over that river, recommending him to construct a pontoon bridge by the Portuguese fortress of Juromenha, to throw up a strong bridge-head to defend it on the eastern bank, and then to lay siege to Badajoz itself. Incidentally he warned Beresford to be careful

to keep his cavalry as much as possible collected and to 1811. hold it in reserve, since there was hardly an officer in the British service who understood how to handle more than two regiments together. This criticism was soon to be vindicated, though probably Wellington at the moment was thinking of Slade rather than of General Long, who was in command of Beresford's horse.

Meanwhile, as we know, but Wellington did not, Soult upon the news of the action of Barrosa had retired hastily to Seville on the 14th, leaving, however, Mortier with fifteen battalions of foot, five regiments of cavalry, and a large proportion of artillery and engineers¹ to prosecute the work which he had begun in Estremadura. There was indeed no hostile force to impede Mortier, the wreck of Mendizabal's army having retired over the Portuguese frontier, where it was living by brigandage ; and accordingly on the 14th of March March 14. the Marshal set out from Badajoz with about half of his force, and, crossing the Portuguese frontier on the same day, invested Campo Maior. This was a small and obsolete fortress with no garrison except one company of regular artillery from Elvas and about eight hundred militia and citizens, great part of them armed only with pikes. But in command was a very able and valiant old officer of Engineers, Major Talaya, who with indomitable spirit defended his crumbling walls against bombardment for eight days, repelled one assault, and finally surrendered on the condition that March 20. only his handful of regular troops should become prisoners of war, but that he and his militiamen should go free, giving their word not to serve again. Meanwhile Latour Maubourg, with two regiments of cavalry, marched on the 15th northward from Badajoz to Albur- March 15. querque, another obsolete fortress, but with a citadel

¹ *Girard's Division* : 34th Line ; 40th Line ; 64th Line ; 88th Line = 11 batts.

Gazan's Division : 100th Line ; 21st Light = 4 batts.

Cavalry of Fifth Corps : 10th Hussars ; 21st Chasseurs.

" First Corps : 26th Dragoons ; 2nd Hussars.

" Fourth Corps : 4th Spanish Chasseurs.

1811. upon a high crag which could only have been reduced after considerable labour by heavy guns, and which was defended by more than eight hundred regular troops. The governor, however, Major-general Cagigal, opened his gates within twenty-four hours, upon the mere threat of approaching infantry and cannon, a disgraceful act which seemed doubly infamous when contrasted with the conduct of the noble old Portuguese Talaya. This done, Latour Maubourg sent one regiment of dragoons north-westward to Valencia di Alcantara, which was abandoned by the garrison and rendered defenceless by its captors. Mortier then recalled the bulk of his force to Badajoz, leaving Latour Maubourg with four regiments of cavalry, a single regiment of infantry, and half of a light battery to remove the serviceable guns of Campo Maior to Badajoz, and to dismantle the fortress beyond repair.

During these days Beresford's troops had been moving down to Portalegre ; and by the 20th, the day of Sir William's own arrival, all of them except the March 22. Fourth Division were there assembled.¹ On the 22nd the Fourth Division itself marched in, but in a sad plight. The men were practically all bare-footed ; five

¹ *Cavalry Division.* Maj.-Gen. Long.

De Grey's brigade. 3rd D.G., 4th D.
13th L.D.

Otway's " 1st and 7th Portuguese.

Artillery. Major Hartman : 2 batteries K.G.L.

Major Dickson : 2 Portuguese batteries.

Second Division. Maj.-Gen. W. Stewart.

Colborne's brigade. 1/3rd, 2/31st, 2/48th, 2/66th.

Hoghton's " 29th, 1/48th, 1/57th.

Lumley's " 2/28th, 2/34th, 2/39th.

Fourth Division. Maj.-Gen. Cole.

Myers's brigade. 1 and 2/7th, 1/23rd.

Kemmis's " 1 co. 2/27th, 1 co. 1/40th, old 97th.

Harvey's " 11th and 23rd Portuguese.

Portuguese Division.

Fonseca's brigade. 2nd and 14th Portuguese Infantry.

Allan Campbell's brigade. 4th and 10th Portuguese Infantry.

Richard Collins's " 5th Portuguese Infantry, 5th Caçadores.

or six hundred had fallen out during the march ; and 1811. Cole reckoned that they would want at least fourteen March 22. thousand pairs of shoes. Hoghton's brigade was also badly off, though not so destitute as were Cole's men ; but Beresford saw with dismay that both the Second and Fourth Divisions would need to be re-equipped before they could undertake any lengthened operations. Such re-equipment, however, was for the present impossible ; and, after two days' halt, the Fourth Division moved forward to Arronches, the rest of the army being two leagues in advance on the road to Campo Maior. Beresford had heard of the fall of the latter place on the evening of the 23rd, and was prepared to invest it if March 23. the enemy should remain there. He had in all about twenty thousand British and Portuguese, and the remnants of Mendizabal's army—eighteen hundred infantry and five hundred cavalry—were to join him on the 25th, so that the operation would be a trifling matter.¹

On the morning of the 24th he moved forward from March 24. Arronches on two parallel roads ; and the two divisions of the army halted for the night at Santa Eulalia and Reguengo, about nine miles west and seven miles northwest respectively from Campo Maior. A reconnoitring party in the early morning was driven back by a patrol of French hussars at the latter place, but nothing more was seen of the enemy. It appears from information gathered from a captured French officer on the following day that Mortier was advised of the approach of the Allies to Arronches, but attached no importance to the news, for, having heard only general reports of Massena's retirement, he did not believe it. However that may be, it is certain that Latour Maubourg remained at Campo Maior that night with a force of about twenty-four hundred men,² taking no especial precautions and

¹ *Wellington MSS.* Beresford to Wellington, 22nd, 24th March 1811.

² Captain Barrett, *History of the 13th Hussars*, i. 127, gives the strength of the force as follows (presumably from the regimental records) : 2nd Hussars, 350 ; 10th Hussars, 350 ; 26th Dragoons, 150 ; 4th Spanish Chasseurs, 80 ; 100th Infantry, Line, 1200 ;

1811, expecting no special danger. On the morning of the March 25, 25th, in showery weather, Beresford resumed his march ; and the infantry uniting on the east side of the Caia moved forward over open country in two parallel columns, the one on the high road and the other to its left. In a short time Sir William, who was riding at the head of the cavalry, came in sight of the town from a distant hill, and observed bodies of French horse protecting a few officers who were engaged in reconnaissance. One of these officers was Latour Maubourg himself who, suddenly realising that his enemy was coming upon him in force, hastened back to Campo Maior and gave orders for the troops to prepare to retreat at once. Fortunately for him a convoy of sixteen heavy guns from the works of the town and of his own siege-train had started for Badajoz some hours earlier, and was well on its way, though weakly escorted ; otherwise he would certainly have been compelled to abandon the cannon. The next thing, therefore, that Beresford saw was the French columns filing out of the town and forming on the glacis ; and he then directed General Long to lead his light cavalry round the north side of the walls, keeping out of range of the guns ; his object being, as he said, to ascertain whether the enemy intended to evacuate Campo Maior or to defend it.

The ground about Campo Maior, though ranging from seven hundred to a thousand feet above the sea, is open, undulating, and well suited for cavalry in every respect, except that it is cut up by a great number of little streams. With the object apparently of turning the heads of these waters, Long made a circuit so wide that Beresford sent a staff-officer to bid him move closer in. Whether this order was justifiable or not, it is difficult to decide ; and indeed the point would

Total, 880 Cavalry, 1200 Infantry. A captured officer of the 26th, however, gave the total of cavalry as over 1000 ; and, adding artillery, we may call the total 2400, which is the figure accepted by Mr. Oman.

be of small importance did it not appear that this 1811. little incident upset the tempers of both commanders. March 25. According to Beresford's private letter to Wellington, he had at first no idea of pushing the enemy much beyond Campo Maior, if they should decide to evacuate it ; and, in answer to Long's enquiries earlier in the morning, he had prohibited anything like a rash attack, while granting permission for the cavalry to take advantage of any favourable opportunity. The truth seems to have been that Beresford was rather nervous, and that Long, taking his cue from him, was perhaps excessive in his precautions. However, in due time, the light cavalry made its way to a height within twelve hundred yards of Campo Maior, when Long, perceiving the French horsemen to be still drawn up beneath the walls, sent a message to Beresford to ask for further orders. The answer came that he was to continue to advance round the town and threaten the enemy's line of retreat. Upon the first movement in this direction Latour Maubourg set his entire force hastily in motion towards Badajoz ; and Beresford thereupon rightly conceived the idea that the French infantry might be overtaken or captured. He reported, however, that he required no more of Long than that he should check the French and compel them to halt and form a front until the British infantry should come up, a task for which, to use his own expression, two hundred troopers would have sufficed.¹

Long meanwhile led his troopers at a trot over high ground in a southerly direction, so as to strike the road to Badajoz ; the Light Brigade moving in column of ranks by threes,² with the Heavy Brigade, which had been sent forward by Beresford, following in two lines a quarter of a mile to the right rear. On Long's right flank a troop of the Thirteenth had been thrown out as skirmishers, and these were incessantly engaged with

¹ *Wellington MSS.* Beresford to Wellington, 26th March 1811.

² "Left in front," so that the word *threes* right would bring the squadrons into line upon their right front.

1811. similar parties of French horse. Thus the pursuit March 25. continued, until at length Long came upon the left flank of Latour Maubourg's main body when it was in the act of crossing a valley immediately below him. The enemy's formation was peculiar. Two half squadrons of hussars led the column ; the infantry followed in square ; two more half squadrons brought up the rear, and, on their left or exposed flank, three squadrons of the 26th Dragoons marched in column, with three more of hussars at right angles to them in line. Beresford's orders were that, if possible, the covering force of cavalry should be first driven off, so that the French infantry might be left without protection ; and this object Long prepared to accomplish. The French appear to have halted and faced about when he came down upon their left flank ; but the formation of the six squadrons into two bodies at right angles to each other was left unaltered ; and the problem set to Long was to open an attack upon one or other of these bodies without offering his flank to the other. Still therefore keeping a direction parallel to that of the enemy's main column, he formed line to his front with two squadrons of the Thirteenth on the right, and two of Portuguese under Colonel Otway on the left, and held the three remaining squadrons of Portuguese in column as a reserve. His design, apparently, was that the Thirteenth should fall upon the flank of the enemy's dragoons, that he himself, by attacking the hussars, should protect their flank as they did so, and that Otway's squadrons should cut off the French retreat.

No sooner, however, had he formed his line than the French dragoons changed position to their left to meet him, thus forming a first line in front of the hussars, and presenting, in fact, a new array of attack in two lines. Long thereupon addressed the colonel of the Thirteenth, "Colonel Head, there is your enemy ; attack him. The Heavy Brigade are coming up in your rear." The opposing lines were now only two hundred yards apart, but though matching only two squadrons against three

of the dragoons and though galled by the fire of the 1811. French infantry, Head led his men against the left and March 25. centre of the enemy, and charged. The French likewise sped forward to encounter them, and the two lines closed in full career ; but so impetuous was the onset of the Thirteenth that they bore the French back upon their second line, and broke through the double array of dragoons and hussars. In vain the right-hand squadron of the dragoons under a cool and intrepid¹ officer tried to turn the tide by wheeling in upon Head's left flank and rear. The Thirteenth gathered themselves up and charged back again ; and finally wheeling about for the third time they swept the struggling French away, and galloped on, still hewing in the midst of them, over the slope of the hill and out of sight.²

So swift and sudden were the onslaught of the British and the rout of the French that few except those who took part in the *mêlée* seem to have realised what had happened. Colonel Dalbiac of the Heavy Brigade saw the chase going forward in the distance and did not mistake its meaning. Colborne, whose infantry was the nearest to the scene of the fight, also took in the situation at a glance. But Long himself, owing to some inequality of the ground, did not witness every phase of the encounter, and was evidently for the moment astonished to find himself alone with the Portuguese and the French infantry. Recovering himself he first made a vain

¹ This young fellow was taken prisoner, and the surviving men of his troop made up a purse to comfort him in his captivity —sufficient testimony to his worth. *Recollections of the Peninsula*, pp. 198-200.

² Beresford in his pamphlet (*Further Strictures on Napier's Peninsular War*, p. 44) declares that Napier's account of this charge, which I have followed, is supposititious. It is not supposititious, and Beresford must have known it, for he himself forwarded to Wellington on the 8th of April 1811 Head's own account that the 13th charged through the French, who were four deep. This expression *four deep* must mean that the 13th defeated both lines of the French cavalry, for if the first line only had been four deep, it would not have outflanked the 13th as it unquestionably did.

1811. attempt to stop the pursuing Thirteenth, and then sent March 25. forward two squadrons under Otway to support them.¹

Then ensued an extraordinary incident which has never yet been explained. One of Long's staff, a Dutch emigrant officer named Baron Tripp,² seeing the Thirteenth swallowed up by three times their numbers of French troopers as they charged, galloped back to the Heavy Brigade and declared that the whole of the British dragoons had been captured. The report spread from mouth to mouth, and presently reached the ears of Beresford, who was hastening to the front, whereupon he directed the Heavy Brigade to halt, and hurried forward to look into matters for himself.

Meanwhile Long, looking round for the Heavy Brigade to come up, was distracted to find no sign of it anywhere. To add to his embarrassment some French hussars, apparently skirmishers, appeared on the heights above him on the side of Badajoz within two hundred yards of his left flank, while simultaneously the French infantry, still with two squadrons at the head and tail of the column, came up abreast of him, having resumed its retreat. With some difficulty, for he was little versed in their language, he conveyed to the Portuguese his order to change front, and was in the act of leading them to their new position, when the hussars advanced for a short distance shouting, and a few shots were fired by the infantry, whereupon the whole of the Portuguese turned tail and galloped away. By great efforts they were rallied and brought back; and Long then despatched one of his staff to hasten up the Heavy

¹ It is one among many irreconcilable details in the various accounts of this affair that Long, in a letter to Beresford of 3rd April 1811, declared that he had sent Otway to support the 13th in obedience to Beresford's own orders. Beresford, in forwarding the letter to Wellington on the 8th of April, did not deny the truth of this. It may be that Beresford's order in question was a general and not a special order.

² Tripp was certainly the offender. "Baron Tripp assured me they (*i.e.* the 13th) were all prisoners," Beresford to Wellington, 26th March 1811.

Brigade. His messenger, seeing Beresford, galloped up 1811. to the head-quarter staff and was asked what had become March 25. of the Thirteenth. He answered that they had defeated the French and were pursuing them, but was told in reply that, on the contrary, they had all been captured. Thereupon he returned at once to inform his brigadier of the fact ; and shortly afterwards Beresford rode up and with great displeasure asked Long what had become of the Thirteenth. What Long's answer may have been is uncertain,¹ but, whatever it was, Beresford in high wrath ordered up the Heavy Brigade, which, forsaking the route appointed for it by Long, crossed to the south side of the road and formed line with its left flank upon it. Two guns of Cleeves's German battery came up at the same time with it on the road, within three hundred yards of the French column ; and at the same time messengers were despatched to hasten up the infantry from the rear. The two guns fired a few shots at long range, and their officer, Major Hartmann, was about to take them closer to their mark when he received an express order from Beresford to halt.² But the French kept moving on ; and, though the Heavy Brigade followed them up on one flank and the Portuguese cavalry on the other, no serious attempt was made to molest them. In a very short time Beresford, calling a general halt, allowed them to go their way in peace.

Meanwhile, though dispersed in the first heat of the pursuit, the Thirteenth to their great credit had rallied

¹ Beresford averred in 1833 (*Letter to G. E. Long*, pp. 24-25) that Long reported to him that he supposed the 13th to have been captured, and supported his assertion by the evidence of the Count of Villa Real. It is, however, more to the point that he made the same statement to Wellington in his letter of 26th March 1811, directly after the action (*Supp. Desp. vii. 90-92*). Here he says distinctly that Long and Baron Tripp assured him that all of the 13th were prisoners. Long of course denied that he made any such statement, and it is hardly credible that he should have done so.

² See Long's *Reply to Lord Beresford's Second Letter*, pp. 15-16.

1811, and reformed not far beyond the scene of the fight.¹ March 25. Presently they were joined by Otway, who had galloped hard to overtake them ; and this officer, doubtless hoping to blood his Portuguese (for the cavalry of that nation so far had rarely conducted itself well), urged Head to continue the pursuit. After all there was no reason why he should not, since he had been assured that the Heavy Brigade would follow him in support ; for the French were too thoroughly beaten to give much trouble. Accordingly the Allies pushed on rapidly, not, as has been repeatedly said, as a disorderly rabble, but as a formed body of disciplined men.² At first the French tried to rally and resist, but were speedily broken ; and very soon they threw down their sabres one after another as they were overtaken, and surrendered. The Portuguese, wretchedly mounted on native ponies, took their horses from the dismounted French and galloped on. Soon they came upon the French convoy which had started in the morning, sixteen heavy guns, besides waggons, stores, horses, mules, and an ammunition-train, all covering a vast length of road. The drivers and gunners first overhauled surrendered instantly ; and troopers were dropped to guard the prisoners and drive the gun-teams. For mile after mile the harrying of the train seems to have continued, until at last, on nearing Badajoz, the drivers of the artillery tried to quicken their speed and escape. It was useless ; they were all of them cut down ; and at last at the bridge-head of Badajoz the pursuit was checked by the guns of the fortress. Not more than twenty fugitives, it is said, entered the gates before the Thirteenth, and one headlong pursuing dragoon was actually captured on the drawbridge.

All the officers of the Thirteenth were present, excepting the adjutant who had been wounded ; their

¹ Wellington MSS. Long to Beresford, 6th April ; Head to Beresford, 6th April 1811. Head says that he only pursued after finding that Otway had come up to support him.

² C. E. Long's *Reply*, p. 47, note.

men calmly reformed under the fire of the fortress, and 1811. they began their return journey to Campo Maior, some March 25. ten miles distant. The prisoners were collected ; the gun-drivers were replaced by dragoons ; and thus carrying their captives and trophies with them, they traversed some five miles of road, when they were met by a trooper of the Thirteenth, who had been despatched by the wounded adjutant to inform them that the main French column of infantry and hussars had been allowed to go free, and was near at hand. Head declined to believe it ; but presently a second messenger, likewise despatched by the adjutant, galloped up to confirm the news, and to add that the French column had rescued and re-armed some of the prisoners taken by the Thirteenth. Thereupon Head decided to abandon prisoners and trophies, and to strike northward across country for Campo Maior. The French horse presently appeared on their left flank and formed up as if for attack, but retired when the British and Portuguese advanced to meet them ; and after a second demonstration of this kind Head was suffered to pass unmolested into Beresford's camp.

The losses of the Thirteenth in this combat and pursuit were ten men killed, three officers and twenty-four men wounded, and twenty-two prisoners. The losses among the Portuguese brought the total number of casualties to one hundred and seventy-one,¹ of which

	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.
¹ 13th L.D. .	10 r. and f., 6 horses.	3 off., 24 r. and f., 10 horses.	22 r. and f., 35 horses.
1st Port. Cav. .	1 off., 10 r. and f., 11 horses.	32 r. and f., 25 horses.	27 r. and f., 32 horses.
7th " "	3 r. and f., 1 horse.	3 r. and f.	28 r. and f., 41 horses.
3rd D.G. .	2 horses.	3 r. and f.	...
	1 off., 23 r. and f., 20 horses.	3 off., 67 r. and f., 35 horses.	77 r. and f., 108 horses.

The 7th Portuguese must have suffered their casualties when they ran away from the French, the 3rd D.G. in skirmishing with the

1811. all but thirty-seven occurred in the two regiments that March 25. were engaged in the pursuit. Of the performance of the Thirteenth, who did not exceed two hundred men, in defeating twice or thrice their numbers single-handed, it is difficult to speak too highly. Indeed I know of nothing finer in the history of the British cavalry; for it must be repeated that the men did not disperse in chase immediately after charging, but rallied and followed up their beaten enemy as a formed body, though no doubt at high speed. It is a legitimate criticism that their pursuit was perhaps pushed beyond the bounds of prudence; but there was this great excuse for Colonel Head, that he thought himself to be supported by the Heavy Brigade, and that, when once he overtook the French convoy, he found the road strewed with fugitives and objects of capture up to the very gates of Badajoz. It is easy to blame him, but the temptation was such as few officers could have resisted; and moreover, if he had been supported and his trophies had been secured, the action would no doubt have become a classic in the annals of cavalry.

Unfortunately for himself, Long, before he was fully acquainted with the facts, reported that the Thirteenth had become an uncontrollable mob after their charge; and Beresford in rather a querulous tone passed on the complaint privately to Wellington, who, always justly sensitive over the ungovernable ardour of his cavalry, took a very severe view of the matter. "Their conduct," he wrote, "was that of a rabble, galloping as fast as their horses could carry them over a plain after an enemy to which they could do no mischief after they were broken. . . . If the Thirteenth Dragoons are again guilty of this conduct I shall take their horses from them, and send the officers and men to do duty at Lisbon." By the time that this letter reached Beresford, Long had already justified to him the behaviour of Head; and Sir

French rear-guard. The missing horses of the Portuguese were most of them replaced by captured French horses, so that the figures greatly exaggerate the loss.

William, while communicating passages of Wellington's 1811. letter to Long, suppressed the threat to dismount the March 25. Thirteenth. Long himself went still further. As in duty bound he read to the Thirteenth a General Order of Wellington's, condemning their impetuosity and want of discipline ; but he added at the close, "I will never permit this to be entered in your order-book. I cannot find words to express my admiration of your gallantry on that occasion ; your discipline was most conspicuous." Finally, on receiving a representation from the field-officers of the Thirteenth, Wellington, while characteristically refusing to retract his reprimand, admitted in conversation with one of the officers that, had the true facts been before him at the time, he would never have issued it. Beresford likewise made amends for his hasty condemnation, and thus the good name of the Thirteenth was vindicated.

The reputation of others among the parties concerned is not so easily to be retrieved. To take first the case of Long, it should seem that, when once he was brought face to face with his enemy, he manœuvred with skill and resolution ; and it must be added that he showed considerable nerve when he made his first attack ; for he could trust none of his light cavalry except the two squadrons of the Thirteenth, and the Portuguese were so miserably mounted that they had some reason for declining to contend with the French. By some extraordinary mischance, however, he appears not to have witnessed the charge, and after it he lost his head completely. He was not wholly without excuse, for the supports on which he had counted had disappeared ; he could not well go forward with Otway when the Heavy Brigade, for all that he knew, was still awaiting his orders ; and to gallop to the top of the hill by himself, or with a Portuguese escort, to see what had happened would probably have meant capture by the French hussars which remained with the French infantry. The conclusion would seem to be that, as the officer in supreme command of the cavalry, he had taken a wrong

1811. station ; but, on the other hand, the Heavy Brigade March 25. had not been joined to his force until some time after he had started, and the effect of leaving the Light Brigade in order to join the reserve might have had the worst influence upon the Portuguese. Great allowance, therefore, must be made for the difficulties of his position, though it is hard to imagine how he allowed himself to be persuaded that the Thirteenth had been captured. Meanwhile he always averred that, if he had not been interfered with, he would have captured the whole of the French foot ; and it is quite possible that he was right. That he could have destroyed twelve hundred French infantry with eight British squadrons only, may be dismissed as impossible ; but it must be remembered that the infantry aforesaid had a squadron of hussars clinging to it for protection, and all the more closely after the abject rout of their companions. By attacking these at the point where they masked the French fire, he might have driven them into the ranks of the French square, which, once broken, would have fallen an easy prey.

And this leads us lastly to consider the behaviour of Beresford. In his first letter to Wellington he blamed Long for "pushing the French so violently as to force them to march, *coute que coute*, always in solid square," whereas he desired only that they should be delayed and compelled to halt and front. Yet when Long at first kept at a respectful distance from the enemy, Beresford called him in closer. Was it likely that an old soldier such as Latour Maubourg, when ten times his numbers were marching upon him, would have halted and fronted unless compelled ? We may acquit Sir William of all but an error in judgment when, deceived by the false report of the capture of the Thirteenth, he halted the Heavy Brigade and took it under his own command ; but his subsequent proceedings were most feeble. By his own evidence the Heavy Brigade was only halted for a few minutes, and was then brought forward at a brisk trot level with the

French infantry, which could not in the meantime have moved very far. Two German guns were by that time March 25. level with the cavalry and were within easy range of the French column : if two guns could have come so far, the remaining four of Cleeves's battery might certainly have been with them ; and in fact their commander was most anxious to bring them up. Beresford pleaded that the gun-teams were so much exhausted that they could drag the guns no farther ; but this was flatly denied by Major Hartmann, who was in command of the two pieces ; and, even if it had been true, there were plenty of horses to be borrowed from the Portuguese cavalry, had there been any real wish to bring the guns forward.¹ Moreover, Colborne's brigade was, according to some accounts, only five hundred yards² from the French columns when Beresford halted it ; and had it been, as Sir William falsely affirmed, two miles distant, it is difficult to believe that the French could not have been delayed until Colborne came up. Colborne himself, perhaps the ablest officer in the army next to Wellington, was so indignant when his brigade was halted that his language estranged from him his divisional commander William Stewart.³ Dickson, Burgoyne, and other good officers took the same view as Colborne, that a great opportunity had been lost ; and it is fairly evident that Beresford was conscious of having done ill on this occasion, otherwise he would not have made wilful misstatements in all his narratives of the action, from the first written on the 26th of March 1811 until the last written in 1833. The truth is that, with many merits, he was unfit for independent command, as Wellington soon discovered, and that he first betrayed his unfitness on the day of the combat of Campo Maior.

¹ See Long's *Reply to Beresford's Second Letter*, pp. 15-16.

² C. E. Long's *Letter*, p. 65 ; and Burgoyne also in his journal says, "The 66th and some light infantry were up."

³ Moore Smith's *Life of Lord Seaton*, p. 153 ; and see Long's *Reply to Beresford's Second Letter*, pp. 9-13.

1811. Meanwhile the French pursued their retreat, picking March 25. up a few British and Portuguese stragglers as they went. When they overtook the convoy they were unable at first to move the guns, for the traces had been cut by the British and the teams dispersed ; but Mortier sent out a small force from Badajoz to bring in the column of Latour Maubourg, and with their help every part of the train, excepting one gun and seven waggons, was saved. The French cavalry, however, was terribly shaken by its defeat, and the losses of the column and convoy were very heavy. The 26th Dragoons alone lost their colonel, Baron de Montmorin (who was slain in single combat by Corporal Logan), seven other officers, and over one hundred men killed, wounded, and taken ; and Beresford, after receiving a flag of truce sent by Latour Maubourg to enquire after Montmorin, reported to Wellington that the French loss had been estimated by Head and Otway at eight hundred, and that he believed it to be true.¹ Even if this figure be reduced by one-half, it represents twice as much as the French were willing to acknowledge officially ; and probably it will not be extravagant to set down the French casualties at five hundred. But more important than all was the admission of the French that they could not stand before the British cavalry.²

Beresford halted for the night at Campo Maior, where he found a few guns and a certain quantity of stores, and summoned some militia to garrison the March 26. place. On the 26th he ascertained that the French had retired south of the Guadiana ; when, reckoning correctly that Mortier could bring no more than ten thousand men to meet him, he prepared to cross the river and expel the French from Estremadura. On this

¹ Wellington MSS. Beresford to Wellington, 28th March 1811.

² The best accounts of this action will be found in C. E. Long's two pamphlets, and in Barrett's *Hist. of 13th Hussars*. See also Dickson MSS., series C. p. 367 (printed by the R.A. Institute) ; Wrottesley's *Life of Burgoyne*, i. 127.

day, accordingly, he pushed the Second Division and 1811. Hamilton's Portuguese forward to Elvas, leaving the March 26. Fourth Division for another day at Campo Maior. At Elvas, however, he was brought to a dead stop. Wellington had promised that sufficient pontoons for a bridge would be found at Elvas or Juromenha ; but only five were discoverable, and it was necessary to construct a trestle-bridge in the shallowest part of the river, with pontoons across the deep channel only. This of course signified delay, which, however, was of the less importance inasmuch as half of the army was disabled by want of shoes, which could hardly be obtained from Lisbon in less than a week. Meanwhile Castaños arrived on the 30th of March, and com- March 30. mended himself to Beresford as "a good kind of fellow and a sensible man," though he seemed "to take things as easy as any other Spaniard." At last on the evening of the 3rd of April the engineers, April 3. according to their undertaking, completed the bridge at Juromenha ; but in the night there rose a flood which swept the trestles away. In despair Beresford resorted to flying bridges, pending the construction of a bridge of casks ; and thus with infinite trouble and delay the troops were passed over the river piece-meal, the whole proceeding lasting three days and nights. Had the French taken the pains to send patrols to watch the proceedings at Juromenha, they might have fallen upon Beresford's isolated detachments on the south bank of the Guadiana, and destroyed them. But Mortier had left the army on the 26th, and handed over the command to Latour Maubourg, who, albeit a general of cavalry, allowed Beresford to prosecute his very dangerous operations unmolested. Only at quite the last moment on the night of the 6th-7th did April 6-7. a French flying column give unpleasant evidence of its arrival by surprising an advanced squadron of the Thirteenth Light Dragoons, and capturing over fifty men of all ranks and sixty-five horses. Beresford, reporting the matter to Wellington, described the event

1811. as one of "the most irregularly neglectful cases that April 6-7. he had ever heard of," and blamed the commander of the squadron. As a matter of fact the person really in fault was an officer of the head-quarters staff.¹

However, the French detachment had arrived too late to hinder the passage of the river, and Latour Maubourg had now to decide how he should meet this new complication of twenty thousand enemies on the southern bank of the Guadiana. Recognising that it was vital for him to maintain communication with Soult, he left three thousand men in Badajoz under General Phillipon, four hundred more in Olivença, and fell back himself with the remainder of his force on the main road from Badajoz to Llerena. Beresford, meanwhile, having brought the last of his men over the April 8-9. river on the 8th, moved forward on the 9th to Olivença, where to his great astonishment he discovered that a French garrison of four hundred men was still installed. His first idea was to mask the petty fortress with a detachment, advance to Valverde, drive back the French rear-guard from Santa Marta, and return to invest Badajoz ; but there was a fresh disappointment in store for him. Wellington had indicated that he might draw his supplies from Estremoz, a Portuguese dépôt about twenty miles west of Juromenha ; but upon application to the British Commissary, Thompson, at the place, Beresford to his dismay found that the magazines were empty. When Mendizabal's defeated remnant retreated to Estremoz, Thompson with culpable imprudence had responded to all their appeals for

¹ The squadron of the 13th had been relieved on outpost duty that very night, and for the first time for forty-eight hours had had something to eat. They had been relieved by a Portuguese squadron which was guided by an officer of the Q.M.G.'s department, and it was through this officer's neglect that the mishap occurred. Barrett's *Hist. of 13th Hussars*, i. 142. D'Urban, the Q.M.G., also blamed the staff-officer (*Oman*, iv. 270), from which one would have thought that Beresford might have known the truth. Beresford's letter is in *Wellington MSS.*, to Wellington, 7th April 1811.

food,¹ and this was the lamentable result. Beresford 1811. with great justice was deeply chagrined. Bad luck had April. dogged his march from the very beginning. The delay in crossing the Guadiana owing to lack of pontoons had enabled the French to restore completely the damaged defences of Badajoz. The want of a proper bridge, due to the same scarcity of pontoons, had kept him with reason in much anxiety as to the means of maintaining his communications ; and now he found that, being unable to move from want of victuals, he might just as well have spared his pains and remained on the north bank of the Guadiana. These mishaps, which were due to no fault of his own, made him, as he said, "very miserable," and probably not the less so forasmuch as Wellington had shown some shortness of temper over the question of passing the river.²

However, there was nothing to be done but to wait, and to employ the idle days in capturing the four hundred unlucky men whom Latour Maubourg had so wrongly left in Olivença.³ Though aware of the weakness of this garrison, and indeed under-estimating its strength by one hundred men, Beresford thought the walls too formidable for an escalade, and sent to Elvas for guns to batter them. The army came before Olivença on the 9th ; and on the 11th the main body April 11. proceeded to Albuera, leaving the Fourth Division to prosecute the siege. The guns were long in coming from Elvas, for it was necessary to carry them over the Guadiana in boats, the bridge of casks being too frail to

¹ Wellington complained of Thompson to the Commissary-General in England, who recalled him instantly. There is a piteous letter from Thompson to Wellington in the *Wellington MSS.* (1st May 1811) deprecating this severity, but of course without effect.

² *Wellington MSS.*, Beresford to Wellington, 8th, 9th April ; *Wellington Desp.*, Wellington to Beresford, 30th March 1811.

³ Lapène insinuates that these unfortunate men were sacrificed in order to gain time ; but, as Mr. Oman shows (iv. 271), Olivença only held out for five days, and it is clear from Beresford's letter that, but for the lack of supplies, it would not have delayed him for an hour. The plea therefore will not stand.

1811. bear them ; but they arrived at length on the 14th, April 15. opened fire on the 15th, and in four hours made a practicable breach ; whereupon the Governor surrendered at discretion, having indeed no cannon that were capable of making any resistance.¹ By this time matters generally were improving. On the 13th Beresford had ceased to be anxious about supplies ; at about the same time a supply of shoes arrived for the bare-footed Fourth Division ; and, best of all, the Spanish Government on the 10th had announced its intention of sending Blake with the six thousand men of Zayas to join Ballesteros at Huelva, and employing the whole—some ten thousand infantry and eleven hundred cavalry—to co-operate with the British in Estremadura. Meanwhile, Castaños, having the remnant of Mendizabal's force at his disposal on the spot, had brought them over the bridge of Merida towards Almendralejo, so that they might advance along that road, while Beresford took the road farther to the east, to drive Latour Maubourg southward to the Sierra Morena. Some time would be required to organise a siege-train from the resources of Elvas ; and Beresford judged that he could not use this delay more profitably than by pushing back the enemy to a respectful distance.²

On the 15th the Fourth Division joined the rest of April 16. the army at Santa Marta, and on the 16th the entire force marched for Zafra ; the advanced guard halting about three miles from the place at Los Santos, while the staff reconnoitred the ground for a camp. News being brought in that the enemy's cavalry was in sight, Long ordered his cavalry to advance, the Thirteenth Light Dragoons leading, followed in succession by two

¹ The garrison when it marched out had 363 of all ranks under arms and 96 sick. Mr. Oman conjectures that Beresford only employed heavy batteries against Olivença because he was unaware of the weakness of the garrison, but the letters in *Wellington MSS.* prove the contrary.

² *Wellington MSS.* H. Wellesley to Beresford, 10th April ; Beresford to Wellington, 13th, 15th, 16th April 1811.

guns, the Portuguese cavalry, and the British Heavy ^{1811.} Brigade. The French cavalry was presently seen in April 16. column, blocking the road to Seville at a point where the ground alongside was narrowed by two walls to a width of less than one hundred yards. After a brief skirmish Long detached the Heavy Brigade to fetch a compass round the enemy's flanks, whereupon the French retired, covering their retreat by fire of carbines from the saddle ; but, being pressed both in front and flank, they presently turned tail and galloped away as fast as their horses could carry them. The Thirteenth pursued for nine miles, almost to Usagre, until their horses were exhausted, when they returned with about one hundred and fifty prisoners over and above a certain number of the enemy cut down, having themselves only a few trifling casualties. The French regiments engaged were the remnants of those defeated at Campo Maior, so that their flight was not surprising ; but it is noteworthy that, though this pursuit was as headlong an affair as that of the 25th of March, Beresford, instead of blaming the Thirteenth, commended them, and acknowledged that they were never out of hand.¹

On the 18th Latour Maubourg evacuated Llerena ; April 18. and Beresford, leaving the Thirteenth at Zafra and detaching Colborne's brigade to harry any French victualling parties, led the bulk of his army northward once more for the siege of Badajoz. But meanwhile the Spanish arrangements had undergone a change. The Government had duly sent the division of Zayas to join Ballesteros as it had promised, and Zayas had accordingly landed at Moguer, opposite to Huelva, to march up country. But Soult, getting wind of the project, detached seven battalions and two regiments of cavalry under General Maransin to attack Zayas, who, on their approach, re-embarked, not without some loss, on the 1st of April. Maransin, however, thinking, as Gazan had thought before him, that it would be well to

¹ C. E. Long's pamphlet, p. 106 ; Barrett's *Hist. of 13th Hussars* ; Wellington MSS. Beresford to Wellington, 18th April 1811.

1811. hunt down Ballesteros, plunged into the mountains, brought him to bay, after several days' chase, at Fregenal, beat him, and drove him northward to Salvatierra de los Barros, whence Ballesteros called upon Beresford for help. It was this appeal which induced Sir William to move the divisions of Cole and Hamilton to Santa Marta on the 15th of April as part of a concerted plan to overwhelm Maransin; but the French general was warned in time and safely rejoined Latour Maubourg by a circuitous route. The Spanish Government thereupon sent the force of Zayas again to sea under the command of Blake, who landed with

April 25. them at Ayamonte on the 25th of April, and joined Ballesteros some days later. The dispositions for the siege of Badajoz, therefore, at last began to take regular form. Of Mendizabal's force, now under the direction of Castaños, a part lay north of the Guadiana to stop any French irruption from the Tagus, and the remainder, strengthened by Colborne's brigade of British, kept Latour Maubourg at arm's length; while Blake and Ballesteros were appointed to guard against any advance of Soult from Seville.

The operations seemed likely to be hastened by the arrival of Wellington, who, seeing that all was quiet for the present in the north, had left Sabugal on the 16th of April in fulfilment of a long-cherished intention, and April 22. arrived at Elvas on the 20th. On the 22nd, escorted by two light battalions of the German Legion, lately landed at Lisbon, and by two squadrons of Portuguese cavalry, he rode round Badajoz, not without interruption from the Governor, who, thinking that the British commander intended to cut off some of the French working parties, sallied out in some strength and captured nearly fifty of the Germans. Returning from April 23. this reconnaissance, Wellington on the 23rd drew up instructions for Beresford in anticipation of practically every contingency. He foresaw that Soult would probably come to the relief of Badajoz, and therefore authorised Beresford to fight or to retire as he might

think best. Should he decide to fight, Wellington 1811. recommended him to collect his troops at Albuera ; April 23. should he prefer to retire, he was to recross the Guadiana, and take up a position first on the Caia and secondly at Portalegre. With regard to the Spaniards he advised that Castaños should continue to hold troops in observation towards Llerena in the south and Almaraz in the north ; that Blake, when he landed, should fix his quarters at Xerez de los Caballeros ; and that Ballesteros should establish himself at Burguillos, close to Zafra, maintaining communication with Castaños at Llerena on the one side, and with Blake at Xerez on the other. In the event of the enemy's advance, no one of the Spanish detachments was to engage in any serious affair, but all were to fall back, Blake and Ballesteros towards the right, and Castaños towards the left of Beresford's chosen position.¹

All this was well foreseen and well prepared, but the arrangements for the actual leaguer were less perfect. On the 6th of April Wellington had asked Beresford to report as to the resources of Elvas for conducting a siege, in order that any deficiencies might be made good from the English battering train. To this request Beresford appears to have replied that Elvas could supply what was necessary, though it is difficult to understand how he could conscientiously have done so. However, Major Dickson of the Artillery was appointed to collect the necessary ordnance, which consisted altogether of thirty-two brass pieces,² including six twenty-four-pounders which had been employed at Olivença. The list seemed fairly formidable upon paper, but in reality these guns were nearly all of them obsolete, dating from the middle of the seventeenth century, while the shot fitted them so ill that the windage seriously affected both the flight of the projectile and the safety of the weapons. There,

¹ *Wellington Desp.* Memorandum of 23rd April 1811.

² Sixteen 24 prs. ; eight 16 prs. ; two 10-in. howitzers ; six 8-in. howitzers. Jones's *Sieges of the Peninsula*, i. 20.

1811, however, the matter was allowed to stand ; and April 23. Wellington drew out a furnished memorandum for the engineers, arranging for the transport of stores from Juromenha, Olivença, and Elvas to the appointed dépôts, and for the preparation of a flying bridge over the Caia. Lastly, he gave his orders, which shall presently be considered in detail, for the conduct of the attack.

On the night of the 23rd the Guadiana rose seven feet perpendicularly, swept away Beresford's bridge of casks, and severed all communication between his corps and Portugal. Wellington therefore ordered Sir William to shift his troops so as to ensure their command of the bridge at Merida, and, while keeping up as close a blockade of Badajoz as circumstances permitted, to defer the siege until he could establish a more direct communication with Elvas either by a ford or by a new bridge. This done, Wellington left April 25. Elvas on the 25th to return to the main army.¹ For some days the Guadiana remained high ; but on the 29th communication was restored by a flying bridge, May 1. and on the 1st of May the bridge of casks was replaced ; indeed from this time forward the weather cleared up, and the river diminished so much as to give no further trouble. Two British batteries, Lefebure's and Hawker's, arrived as reinforcements ; and at May 3. last on the 3rd of May Colonel Fletcher, the commanding engineer, reported that he was ready to form his dépôt of stores for the siege. Accordingly on the night of the 4th Stewart marched off with three British brigades from Talavera Real, and on the morning of May 5. the 5th invested Badajoz on the south side of the river without any loss. On the 6th the remaining infantry

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Beresford, 24th April 1811. It is generally represented that Wellington was recalled from Elvas by serious movements of the French at Ciudad Rodrigo, but Spencer mentions no such movement until the 23rd, and it is evident from Wellington's letters, to Spencer of the 24th and to Liverpool of the 25th April, that when he left Elvas he was under no apprehension.

of the army moved up close to the city
8th General Lumley completed the invest
north bank of the river with Kemmis
some Portuguese troops from Elvas.

siege the Spanish generals, all of whom
Wellington's proposals, took up the positions ass
to them. Madden's Portuguese cavalry lay at Merida,
and the British cavalry, strengthened by Lefebure's
battery of horse-artillery, at Villafranca and Zafra ;
while Colborne harried the French posts between
Llerena and the Sierra Morena with such energy and
audacity that, though he had no more than two
thousand men at his disposal, he actually compelled
them to withdraw into Andalusia.

The city of Badajoz lies at the northern end of a
line of heights, which rises steadily south-eastward for
some twelve miles before descending upon the village
of Albuera ; and the space within the fortifications
measures about fourteen hundred yards by one thousand
yards. The ground on which it stands is highest at
the north-eastern angle, being there somewhat over one
hundred and thirty feet above the level of the river,
and from thence slopes down to the Guadiana on the
north, and to the plain on the south and west. At
this angle stands the castle, consisting of an ancient and
lofty wall, broken by turrets, and presenting further
a tower of considerable height.¹ From the northern
and eastern faces of this wall descends a grassy declivity,
everywhere very steep, and in places precipitous, though
nowhere precipitous from top to bottom ; and this,
together with a boggy stream, the Rivillas, which
covers the whole of the eastern front, affords sufficient
natural defence. Along the north face the sole pro-
tection is a single solid wall, the river rendering further
fortification unnecessary. The remainder of the fortress

¹ This tower is much frequented by kestrels, which may be seen
circling round it in numbers. Climbing up to the higher battle-
ments, I unwittingly put my hand on a kestrel which was sitting on
her eggs.

1811. is enclosed by regular works with eight bastions, the scarp being for the most part thirty feet high, though in places less, the curtain eight or ten feet lower, the ditch broad, and the counterscarp revetted to a height of six or seven feet. Between the bastions are eight demi-lunes, of earth only, and unrevetted. The out-works include the fort of Pardaleras, opposite the middle of the southern face and about two hundred yards from the ditch—a crown-work consisting of the usual bastion and two half-bastions, but with a low scarp, narrow ditches, and no defence to the gorge except a palisade ; a lunette called Fort Picurina, on an eminence outside the south-eastern angle and on the farther side of the Rivillas ; and a second and less important lunette, that of San Roque, also on the farther side of the Rivillas, opposite the middle of the east front. Lastly, on the north side of the Guadiana stands the Fort of San Cristobal on the summit of a rocky height, which rises almost sheer out of the water over against the castle, and dominates it completely, the river at this point being at its narrowest, and the range from the rampart of San Cristobal to the wall of the castle less than three hundred and fifty yards.

Such is the fortress of Badajoz, which, but for the repair of the breach made by the British in 1812, remains to-day much the same as it was a century ago. Soult, when besieging it in February 1811, had chosen the fort of Pardaleras for his first point of attack, and had made his breach between the third and fourth bastions near the south-western angle. Wellington on the advice of his engineers ordered ground to be broken simultaneously before Pardaleras, Picurina, and San Cristobal ; but it is evident that he, or at any rate his engineers, looked upon the capture of the two forts first named as wholly subordinate to that of the last ; an unfortunate idea, because, as Soult's engineers had realised, San Cristobal was the strongest of all the May 8-9. works. However, on the night of the 8th-9th the trenches were begun. In the matter of Pardaleras and

Picurina the operation consisted practically in reopening 1811. the French entrenchments on the Cerro del Viento and the Sierra de San Miguel, two heights which commanded these works. Before San Cristobal the first soil was turned on a knoll, of rather greater elevation, upon the range of rocky hills which runs northward from the river, and a battery was traced out for three heavy cannon and two howitzers. The ground was so hard and rocky that small progress was made and little cover thrown up; indeed after forty-eight hours of labour scarce anything had been accomplished, though a considerable number of the troops had been killed or wounded by the incessant fire of the enemy. On the morning of the 10th the French made a sortie which May 10. was repulsed with little difficulty by the besiegers; but these, imprudently pursuing their assailants too far, were driven back in their turn by the guns of San Cristobal with a loss of over four hundred killed and wounded. However, during the night of the 10th and 11th a new battery was begun to enfilade the bridge and prevent further sorties; and, the first battery having been completed, fire was opened early in the morning of the 11th. Unfortunately the gunners of the Allies May 11. were chiefly Portuguese, brave young fellows but without experience, and the guns were even worse than the gunners; whereas the French fire was so effective that in the course of the day four out of the five pieces in the battery were disabled. Accordingly on the following night a new battery of four guns was com- May 11-12. menced immediately to the left of that which had been silenced, and this proved to be the last of the operations against San Cristobal. Meanwhile the batteries against Pardaleras and Picurina had been completed with better results, the soil being more tractable, but their fire had done only trifling damage owing to the length of the range. On the 10th Beresford received news that a French corps was moving to the relief of the place; and on the 11th this news was so far confirmed that he ordered all the stores on the

1811. south bank of the Guadiana to be transferred to the north bank, and every preparation to be made for

May 12. retiring. On the 12th the intelligence of the enemy seemed to indicate less serious intentions than had at first been conjectured, and Beresford sanctioned the opening of a new trench against the castle on the plain to north of the river ; but at night came information that Soult had arrived at Llerena, and Beresford, cancelling his orders, directed the siege to be abandoned.

May 13-15. On the night of the 13th all the artillery was withdrawn from the batteries, and on the 14th and 15th the whole of the train and stores were sent away to Elvas, the gabions, fascines, and other material which could not be moved, being burned.

Thus abruptly ended the first British siege of Badajoz, and it cannot be called a brilliant operation. The engineers had chosen a wrong point of attack ; but all men are fallible, and they may be excused for everything except neglect to study the proceedings of the French a few weeks before. The means at their disposal, however, were lamentably insufficient. There was a British siege-train lying in the Tagus, but Wellington did not bring it up ; and the material taken from the walls of Elvas was so defective that half of the twenty-four pounders, though untouched by the enemy's fire, were rendered unserviceable by drooping of the muzzle.¹ Of the shortcomings of the artillery-men, which were due to no want of courage or of zeal, enough has already been said ; but more serious even than the dearth of good gunners was the absolute lack of trained sappers. This was an old defect in the British Army which the Duke of York, as we have seen, had tried to make good in 1799 by the establishment of the Royal Staff Corps. But the strength of this corps in 1810 even on paper was under six hundred men, and these were scattered about in small bodies all over the Empire ; there were practically none in Portugal until March 1811, and the number actually

¹ Dickson, p. 405.

at disposal of the engineers in May was three sergeants, 1811. three corporals, and thirteen rank and file. Since 1793 many officers had drawn attention to the absence of all resources necessary for a siege, but such remonstrances had remained unheeded. Martinique, Copenhagen, and Middelburg had been overpowered by bombardment, the vicinity of all three places to the sea permitting, though not without grave risk of failure, the enormous expenditure of ammunition which is necessary for the reduction of fortresses by this method. Now for the first time since 1793—when the Austrians were at hand to conduct the operations scientifically—a British army was set down to capture a fortress out of reach of the sea ; and everything was wanting. Measures were taken, as shall in place be told, at long past the eleventh hour to remedy this deficiency ; but Wellington could not wait for two years until a new organisation had been perfected, and we shall see him compelled to seize fortified places by the roughest and readiest of methods at a fearful sacrifice of life.¹

¹ Jones's *Sieges of the Peninsula*, I. xvi, xix, 375, 377 ; Connolly's *History of Royal Sappers and Miners*, i. 178, 185 ; and see Napier, iii. 531-532 (3rd ed.). His furious attack on "the negligence and incapacity of a government always ready to plunge the nation into war without the slightest care of what was necessary to obtain success" is probably intended to apply to Perceval's Government, in which case it is, as usual, grossly and shamefully unfair. The reproach applies with equal truth to every British Government from 1714 until 1811, and to a good many subsequent to that latter date ; but, to be just, it should be levelled at the House of Commons and the British nation at large.

CHAPTER V

1811. WELLINGTON quitted Elvas on the 25th of April, riding away, as he had come, through Portalegre and Castello Branco by stages which he appears to have considered easy. On the 27th,¹ however, he met letters from Spencer, dated the 26th, reporting that the Sixth and Eighth Corps were entering Ciudad Rodrigo, and that a house in that town had been prepared for Massena ; whereupon he pushed forward April 28. with such speed that on the night of the 28th he reached Spencer's head-quarters at Alameda. Little of importance had happened at the front since his departure. On the morning of the 23rd² a French reconnoitring party of two battalions and a squadron forced the bridge of Marialva over the Azava, but was driven back with some loss by two companies of the Fifty-second and a company of Rifles. A second but feebler attempt was made upon the same post on the following day, after which all was left quiet. On the 28th Cotton, who had returned from England and resumed command of the outposts, reported that the enemy had reconnoitred El Bodon in some force. There could be no doubt that the French were assembled in considerable strength at Ciudad Rodrigo, and that, though the Agueda was not yet fordable by infantry, Massena was bent upon making a great effort for the relief of Almeida. Wellington on his side was not less resolute to foil him,

¹ Not on the 25th, as stated by Mr. Oman ; see *Wellington Desp.*, to Liverpool, 1st May 1811.

² Not on the 22nd, as Mr. Oman says, misled by Simmons' diary.

if necessary by a pitched battle. "The enemy may be 1811. stronger than they were when they were obliged to April 28. evacuate Portugal," he wrote to Liverpool on the 1st of May, ". . . but still I feel confident that they have it not in their power to defeat the allied army in a general action."¹

Massena, meanwhile, had not found his difficulties diminished with his arrival in Spain. He had applied to Marshal Bessières, the ruler of the district, for provisions to be ready at Salamanca for his starving army; and Bessières had announced that abundance would be found not only there but also at Ciudad Rodrigo. Examination, however, showed that not more than one-fifth of the quantity promised by the Duke of Istria was to be found in these two places; and Massena, with no money in his own military chest, was obliged to make contracts for the purchase of victuals. Again, Massena's cavalry and artillery were in a lamentable state from want of horses, and his troops generally were in great need of rest; wherefore he begged Bessières to send him a division of infantry, twelve to fifteen hundred horses, and three well-horsed batteries. Bessières replied that the disturbed state of his government made this impossible. Letters from Paris then arrived, containing acid criticisms from the Emperor upon the late retreat; which were followed by more messages from Bessières, promising everything but performing nothing, until at last Massena lost his temper and declared that his colleague's letters were "inconceivable." With much difficulty and by inordinate exertion he gathered together provisions sufficient to hush the complaints of his starving troops and to bring his regiments gradually forward, often much against the will of subordinate generals, to the point of concentration; and on the 29th he warned Bessières April 29. that he hoped to begin operations on the morrow. All day long he waited for some sign of the Duke

¹ Wellington MSS. Spencer to Wellington, 23rd, 26th April; Cotton to Wellington, 28th April 1811.

1811. of Istria ; but nothing came except fresh despatches from Paris, in which the Emperor, supposing the Army of Portugal to be at Alcantara, ordered Massena to detach d'Erlon's Corps to Andalusia. Seldom has a commander passed through more irritating and agitating days than did the Prince of Essling during the month of April 1811.¹

None the less he had at least one consolation. Salamanca and Valladolid were full of drafts and recovered invalids waiting to join their corps, which gave him a real increase of strength ; while the organisation of the Army was improved by the embodiment of several odd battalions from the Ninth Corps and from Clausel's division in the regiments to which they belonged of the Second and Sixth Corps. But the cavalry was still very weak, for his fourteen regiments could put only three thousand of all ranks into the field ;² and the artillery was even worse, for there were not teams enough to horse more than twelve guns. The Marshal clung to the hope that Bessières might yet do something for him, but the Duke of Istria seemed to think that the most valuable reinforcement which he could

May 1. bring to his colleague was himself ; for on the 1st of May he rode up while Massena was reviewing part of his troops, and greeted him with thanksgiving to God that he had arrived in time for the new campaign. "But what have you brought with you ?" asked the Prince of Essling. "Lepic's and Wathier's brigades of cavalry, six guns, and thirty teams," was the reply. The reinforcement, in fact, amounted to about seventeen hundred men, of whom nearly nine hundred were cavalry of the Guard, and seven hundred and fifty light horsemen. It was a small number compared with the eight thousand for which Massena had asked, or with the ten thousand which Bessières had at one time promised ; but at least it was better than

¹ Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna* ; Wellington Desp. iv. 846-850 (1851 ed.).

² See the return in Oman, iv. 625-628.

nothing. This accession brought Massena's numbers 1811, up to between forty-seven and forty-eight thousand of all ranks, namely, about forty-two thousand infantry and forty-five hundred cavalry, with thirty-eight guns.¹

On the 2nd of May the French army crossed the May 2. Agueda by the bridge of Ciudad Rodrigo, and divided into two columns, of which the right advanced upon Marialva and the left upon Espeja. The British cavalry and Light Division retired skirmishing before them from Gallegos; and by the evening the Second Corps and Solignac's division were about that place, the Sixth in rear of Espeja, and the Ninth in reserve before Carpio. Wellington, for his part, withdrew all his baggage to the rear in the course of the morning; told off Pack's brigade of Portuguese with one regiment of Portuguese cavalry, one British battalion and two guns for the blockade of Almeida; and brought up his troops

¹ Massena's Army, 1st May 1811.

Second Corps. Reynier.

Merle's division	9 batts.	4891	}
Heudelet's "	12 "	5491	
Soult's Cavalry Brigade . .	3 regts.	682	

Sixth Corps. Loison.

Marchand's division	12 batts.	5872	}
Mermet's "	12 "	6702	
Ferey's "	10 "	4232	
Lamotte's Cavalry Brigade . .	2 regts.	334	

Eighth Corps. Junot.

Solignac's division	10 batts.	4714	}
Clausel's division guarding ammunition. . . .			

Ninth Corps. D'Erlon.

Claparède's division	9 batts.	4716	}
Conroux's "	9 "	5588	
Fournier's Cavalry Brigade . .	3 regts.	794	

Cavalry Division. (Montbrun).

2 brigades	6 regts.	1187	}
Artillery	5 batts.	430	

Bessières's Corps (detachment).

2 brigades of cavalry	1566	1,566	}
Train, etc. (say)		500	

Total 47,699

1811. to the position which he had selected for them. His May 2. strength for the line of battle little exceeded thirty-seven thousand of all ranks, the Portuguese cavalry and infantry being both of them of no more than half their proper strength, owing to the neglect and mismanagement of the Regency. His infantry numbered thirty-four thousand, of which twenty-three thousand were British ; his cavalry eighteen hundred and fifty, of which eighteen hundred were British ; and his guns forty-eight, half British and half Portuguese. Thus, though enjoying some superiority in the matter of artillery, he was lamentably inferior to the French in cavalry ; and this, owing to the scene of the operations, was a very serious disadvantage.¹

1 Cavalry Division. Cotton.

Slade's Brigade.	1st D., 388 ; 14th L.D.,	766	1854
378	766		
Arentschild's Brigade.	16th L.D., 362 ;		
1st Hussars, K.G.L., 414	776		
Barbaçena's Brigade.	4th and 10th Portuguese Line	312	

First Infantry Division. Spencer.

Stopford's Brigade.	1/Coldstream Guards,	1943	7565
940; 1/3rd Guards, 959; 1 co. 5/60th, 44	1943		
Nightingall's Brigade.	2/24th, 371; 2/42nd,		
445; 1/79th, 922; 1 co. 5/60th, 36	1774		
Howard's Brigade.	1/50th, 597; 1/71st,		
497; 1/92nd, 764; 1 co. 3/95th, 76	1934		
Lowe's Brigade.	1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th Line batts. K.G.L.; 2 cos. L.I.	1914	

Third Infantry Division. Picton.

Mackinnon's Brigade.	1/45th, 508 ; 74th,	1863	5480
485; 1/88th, 687; 3 cos. 5/60th, 183	1863		
Colville's Brigade.	2/5th, 504; 2/83rd,		
460; 2/88th, 467; old 94th, 536	1967		
Power's Brigade.	9th and 21st Portuguese Line (4 batts.)	1650	

Fifth Infantry Division. Erskine.

Hay's Brigade.	3/1st, 672 ; 1/9th, 627 ;	1770	5158
2/38th, 402 ; 1 co. Brunswick Oels, 69	1770		
Dunlop's Brigade.	1/4th, 612 ; 2/30th, 507 ;		
3/44th, 437 ; 1 co. Brunswick Oels, 68	1624		
Spry's Division.	3rd and 15th Portuguese Line ; 8th Caçadores ; (5 batts.)	1764	

The ground chosen by Wellington for a general action was the western margin of the great table-land of May 2. Leon, on a ridge between two little streams named the Dos Casas and the Turones¹—on the crest, in fact, of the most westerly, save one, of the waves of that great undulating plain. The Dos Casas rises in a swamp of some extent, hard by Nave de Haver, a village which is conspicuously marked by a high rounded hill above it. From this swamp it issues in two tiny rivulets which flow northward in parallel courses for over three miles before they unite. The more easterly of them is

Sixth Infantry Division. Alex. Campbell.

Hulse's Brigade.	1/11th, 837 ; 2/53rd, 459 ; 1/61st, 697 ; 1 co. 5/60th, 48	. . . . .	2041	} 5250
Burne's Brigade.	2nd, 558 ; 1/36th, 514	. . . . .	1072	
Madden's Brigade.	8th and 12th Port.		
Line (4 batts.)	. . . . .	. . . . .	2137	

Seventh Infantry Division. Houston.

Sontag's Brigade.	2/51st, 590 ; 85th, 387 ; Chasseurs Brit., 839 ; 8 cos. Brunswick Oels, 593	2409	} 4590
Doyle's Brigade.	7th and 19th Portuguese Line, 2nd Caçadores (5 batts.)	2181	

Light Division. Craufurd (*returned 4th May*).

Beckwith's Brigade.	1/43rd, 754 ; 5 cos. 1 and 2/95th, 430	1184	} 3815
Drummond's Brigade.	1 and 2/52nd, 1377 ; 4 cos. 4/95th, 357	. . . . .	1734
Portuguese Brigade.	1st and 3rd Caçadores, 897	. . . . .	897

Ashworth's Portuguese Brigade.

6th and 18th Portuguese Line	} 2539
6th Caçadores	

Artillery.

British.	Bull's and Ross's troops, R.H.A.	. . . . .	} 987
	Lawson's and Thompson's, F.A.	
Portuguese.	4 batteries	. . . . .
Engineers and Train	. . . . .	. . . . .	226

Total 37,504

¹ The varieties in the spelling of this name seem to be endless. The Portuguese spelling is Turoës. Arteche in his map spells it Toiroens, and in his text indifferently Turon and Turones. I have chosen the last of these forms as being familiar and not incorrect.

1811, called the Ribeira del Campo, and the more westerly the May 2. Dos Casas, the latter of which after a course of about two miles passes through the village of Poço Velho. Before this village is another swamp—in 1811 of small area and covered with woods, but now dotted only with scattered trees—which helps to swell the petty volume of its waters. From Nave de Haver downwards to the junction of the two little streams the valley of the Dos Casas is so shallow as to present no great obstacle; but from that point it begins to betray the true characteristic of the Spanish rivers by digging itself a deeper bed. Nevertheless the depression is still shallow and the banks of no very formidable gradient when, about a mile below its confluence with the Ribeira del Campo, the stream runs past Fuentes de Oñoro. This low-lying village straggles along the western margin for three-quarters of a mile, the only building visible at any distance being the church, which is situated upon a point somewhat higher than the surrounding ground. Gardens and other enclosures fenced in by stone walls contribute to make the post in a high degree defensible. Below the village the valley becomes a rock-studded ravine which grows deeper and steeper as the waters are swollen by countless tiny tributaries, until underneath Fort Concepcion, about eight miles beyond Fuentes de Oñoro, the stream flows at a level from three to four hundred feet below the summit of the ridge.

It was behind these eight miles of ravine¹ that Wellington designed to accept battle, resting his right upon Fuentes de Oñoro and trusting with justifiable confidence to the natural strength of the ground to protect his left. But there was nothing to prevent Massena from making a wide turning movement over the flat ground about Nave de Haver and falling upon

¹ Mr. Oman, following Napier, calls the distance five miles; but the latest modern Portuguese and Spanish surveys of all scales that I have seen (I have five before me as I write) without exception show the distance to be between seven and a half and eight miles, as indeed does Mr. Oman's own plan of the battle.

the British right flank, in which case retreat over the chasm of the Coa would have been difficult. In the May 2. orders given for the possible contingency of a retirement Wellington proposed to draw off his army by Aldea de Ribeira, Villar Maior, and Malhada Sorda, to southwest and west of Nave de Haver ; but, in the event of a flanking attack from the south, this would have been impossible, and he must have been reduced to the solitary bridge of Castello Bom, with grave risk of disaster. The peril, however, did not at first appear very obvious to him, though he prevailed with Julian Sanchez to occupy Nave de Haver with his little corps of Spanish infantry and cavalry.

On the morning of the 3rd Massena resumed his forward movement, driving the advanced posts of the Light Division before him into Fuentes de Oñoro ; and presently his army came into sight of the British in three columns. On the French right, that is to say at the northern end of their line, the Second Corps approached the Dos Casas by Alameda, nearly five miles below Fuentes de Oñoro ; in the centre Solignac's division moved just to the south of the village ; and on the left were massed the Sixth Corps and Montbrun's cavalry division, with the Ninth Corps in reserve. A convoy for the revictualling of Almeida marched in rear of all. Wellington therefore made the following dispositions. The Fifth Division, forming the left of his line, was drawn up a little to south of Fort Concepcion and the Sixth next to right of it ; while behind Fuentes de Oñoro were the First, Third, and Seventh Divisions, with the Light Division in reserve, and the cavalry to the right rear. The village itself was occupied by twenty-eight light companies,¹ British, German, and Portuguese, of the First and Third Divisions, with the Eighty-third in support ; the whole, about two thousand men, being under command of Colonel Williams of the Sixtieth, who had handled the light troops so ably at Bussaco.

¹ That is to say, by all the light companies of the First and Third Divisions, except those of the brigade of Guards.

1811. After reconnaissance¹ Massena, who had accompanied May 3. the Sixth Corps, perceived without difficulty that the concealed village² of Fuentes de Oñoro was the key of the position ; and between two and three o'clock in the afternoon he ordered Ferey's division of ten battalions to attack it, while Reynier made a feint advance towards the north. Wellington accordingly sent the Light Division towards Fort Concepcion to check this latter movement, which, however, was soon recognised to be of no importance. The assault upon the village was more serious. Ferey threw his first brigade into action in three columns, which by sheer weight of numbers drove the British from the lower ground up to the church and to the walls surrounding it. But here Williams's reserves made a counter-attack, repelled the assailants, and recovered the lost ground. Ferey then brought up his second brigade, and making another onslaught at two different points again beat back the British, who retired contesting every inch of ground. The Hanoverian Legion of the French service, which took part in this phase of the engagement, being dressed in scarlet, was mistaken for an English regiment, and was allowed to form and pour in a volley before the error was discovered.³ Williams was severely wounded, and matters were going ill for the British, when Wellington sent down the Seventy-first and Seventy-ninth, with the Twenty-fourth in support, to restore the balance of the fight. The French had at the moment gained so much ground that their cavalry as well as infantry were careering about the village ; but the Seventy-first, with

¹ Mr. Oman states that Wellington's line was invisible, the main body being withdrawn behind the crest of the hill according to his custom. But Charles Stewart (*Londonderry MSS.* Stewart to Castle-reagh, 8th May 1811) describes the line as "very much exposed."

² "Ce village était caché par les accidents du terrain," Massena to Berthier, 7th May 1811.

³ So says Donaldson of the 94th, *Eventful Life of a Soldier*, p. 193. Marbot, on the contrary, declares (ii. 459) that the Hanoverian Legion was fired upon both by the French 66th and by the French artillery, otherwise the attack would have succeeded.

Colonel Cadogan at their head, charged and bore them 1811. back, capturing many prisoners ; and with a desperate May 3. effort the British drove the enemy across the water and pursued them over the plain until checked by the French cavalry. Massena then launched four battalions of Marchand's division into the fight ; but these, though they occupied a few scattered buildings on the eastern side of the stream, were unable to advance farther. The firing was continued until after nightfall, and renewed on the following morning until ten o'clock, when it was suspended by mutual consent for the removal of the dead and wounded. The struggle had cost the British two hundred and fifty-nine, and the French six hundred and fifty-two of all ranks ; over one hundred and sixty of the latter being prisoners.¹

Though he might report in his despatch that he held the greater part of Fuentes de Oñoro during the night, Massena could not but be conscious that his first effort had failed, and that in fact he had chosen the wrong point of attack. On the morning of the 4th therefore May 4. he sent Montbrun out in force to reconnoitre the ground to the south, and ascertained that on the side of Fuentes de Oñoro there were practically no troops of the Allies excepting the guerilla-band of Julian Sanchez at Nave de Haver, and therefore nothing to prevent the turning of Wellington's right. The Marshal issued his orders accordingly. On the north Reynier was to make a demonstration to his front, and, if the troops opposed to him should move southward, he was to follow them. Ferey's division was to be arrayed as if for attack before Fuentes de Oñoro, though without committing itself ; and the Ninth Corps was to be ranked before daylight to the rear of Ferey in two lines with long distance between regiments, so as to give the impression that the whole of the Sixth Corps was in the same position as on

¹ The details of this fight are drawn from Koch's *Mémoires de Masséna*; Donaldson's *Journal of a Soldier of the 71st*; and Jameson's *Historical Record of the 79th*. The fact that firing was renewed on the 4th is confirmed by Koch, and by Massena's despatch.

1811. the 3rd. Meanwhile the divisions of Marchand and May 4. Mermet, with that of Solignac in support, were to move under cover of night opposite Poço Velho and assail it at dawn, with Montbrun's division and the cavalry brigades of Fournier and Wathier on their left to turn Nave de Haver. The plan was not unworthy of a great commander.

Wellington on his side had partly perceived the bent of Massena's reconnaissance; and, yielding to the earnest advice of Spencer, he detached the Seventh Division to the hill overlooking Poço Velho, so as to prevent, if possible, the passage of the Dos Casas at that point. This disposition practically extended his front to a length of twelve miles, with a gap of two miles between Poço Velho and Fuentes de Oñoro. The only other changes made since the 3rd were that the light companies had been withdrawn from the latter village and replaced by the Seventy-first and Seventy-ninth, with the Twenty-fourth in support, and that the Light Division had been recalled to its first station in rear of the centre. An event of not less importance was that Craufurd arrived on the evening of the 4th from England, and resumed command of his division amid joyful cheers from all his men, both British and Portuguese.

May 5. Early on the morning of the 5th of May Solignac's division was observed moving southward, together with a great mass of cavalry; and the British dragoons under Cotton, Bull's battery of Horse Artillery, and the Light Division were at once ordered to the support of Houston, while the First and Third Divisions were likewise set in motion to take ground to their right. The divisions of Marchand and Mermet at this time were massing themselves out of sight behind the conical hill of Nave de Haver. Houston for his part had stationed the Eighty-fifth and 2nd Caçadores in Poço Velho and in the wood adjoining it, with his two remaining regiments thrown back farther to the right on the plain towards Nave de Haver. The first collision of the day appears to have taken place between a squadron of

Lepic's horse-grenadiers and Houston's picquets in the 1811. wood, the French attempting to charge the skirmishers May 5. among the trees, which were not densely grouped, but soon abandoning the attempt.¹ Presently Fournier's cavalry brigade advanced by Nave de Haver upon the bands of Julian Sanchez, which retired hastily without offering any resistance, leaving two squadrons of the Fourteenth Light Dragoons to bear the whole weight of the onset. These squadrons showed a bold front, but were whirled away by superior numbers and borne back to Poço Velho, where their pursuers were checked by a volley from one of Houston's picquets concealed in the brushwood. Farther to the north another body of French horse—apparently Wathier's brigade—encountered a squadron of the Sixteenth Light Dragoons and one of German Hussars, which, being badly handled, charged ineffectually, and were driven back likewise upon Poço Velho with considerable loss.

Now came the turn of the infantry. Marchand's division in column of double companies emerged from behind the hill of Nave de Haver, and, slanting to its right so as to approach Poço Velho with its front very nearly facing north, swept Houston's skirmishers out of the wood, drove them into the village, and stormed it out of hand by sheer weight of numbers. The unlucky Eighty-fifth and Caçadores fell back up the hill in disorder, with every prospect of being cut to pieces by the French horse ; but two or three squadrons of British dragoons came forward to cover their southern flank, while simultaneously the Rifles at the head of the Light Division plunged into the wood by the village and checked the advance of the French infantry.² Of what then ensued it is impossible to give any clear or connected description, so much intermingled were the combatants. According to two of the British accounts most

¹ Maxwell's *Peninsular Sketches*, i. 189.

² That the Light Division came thus early into action is, I think, clear from the narratives of every member of it that was present, Simmons, Kincaid, Leach, Costello, and Napier, particularly the two latter.

1811. of the French troopers were drunk,¹ galloping in all May 5. directions with no kind of order and under no sort of control. In any case, after considerable delay, due to the refusal of Bessières to send him the guns of the Imperial Guard, Montbrun appears to have ordered a general charge, which for the moment swept the British cavalry, though fighting hard, clean off the ground. In one quarter of the field the French troopers overtook and swarmed round two guns of Bull's battery under Captain Norman Ramsay, which had waited, apparently, for too long in an exposed position. Quite undismayed, Ramsay, putting teams and gunners to the gallop, broke through the French ; and parties of the Royals and Fourteenth coming to his rescue drove the enemy back with the loss of several prisoners.² Elsewhere the hostile squadrons forced the British cavalry to take refuge either behind the Light Division, most of which had been formed by Craufurd into squares, or behind the foreign brigade of Houston's division. A few of these last, which were not formed in square, were cut down ; but Houston had ensconced his battalions among rocks and stone fences ; and the most dangerous attack was checked by the Chasseurs Britanniques, who, safely sheltered behind a wall, gave the French a volley which sent them back, though seemingly more bewildered than hurt.³ The behaviour both of the Chasseurs and of the Brunswickers at this critical moment was admirable.

¹ See *Life of Lord Combermere*, i. 197 ; Maxwell's *Peninsular Sketches*, i. 190.

² Charles Stewart, the Adjutant-General, led this charge after his usual gallant fashion, and is said to have captured the French colonel, Lamotte.

³ Napier uses the word "bewildered" ; and the writer in Maxwell's *Peninsular Sketches*, who was one of those that took refuge behind Houston's division, declares that the volley did little harm, though it stopped the French short. The whole incident bears out the story that many of the French troopers were drunk. Costello has a curious tale of the trial of two British soldiers for being drunk on the morning of the fight, so that there may have been liquor about Nave de Haver.

Hereupon there seems to have been a lull on this part of the field ; and Montbrun has been much reproached by French writers for his inactivity in not following up what had all the appearance of a success. It may be doubted, however, whether that success had been more than superficial ; and it should seem that the huge mass of the French cavalry, thrice as strong as that of the British, was either very badly handled or else was utterly unmanageable. It is true that the British horse had behaved superbly, rallying and forming new fronts as often as they were broken ; but none the less they should never have been allowed to escape as they did, unbeaten and quite prepared to renew the fight. It is difficult also to understand what Loison was about ; for the divisions of Marchand and Mermet seem to have done nothing for some time after the storm of Poço Velho, except exchange an aimless fire of skirmishers with the British riflemen in the wood. Montbrun of course needed time to rally and reform his scattered squadrons, but he had Lepic's brigade still in reserve, and would have thrown it into the fight had not Lepic refused to move without orders from Bessières. Meanwhile Marchand shrank from exposing his infantry in the plain without the protection of the cavalry, so that he also remained stationary. From all of which it is to be inferred that there was ill-feeling between the French divisional generals, and that they were more intent upon thwarting than helping each other. Sure it is that, at the moment when the British right had been turned, their cavalry for the time being dispersed and the Seventh and Light Divisions isolated from the main body, not an effort was made by the French to turn the advantage to profit.¹

¹ The story about the guns, told by Koch, and, as I have said, tacitly confirmed by Massena, is evidently the foundation for the tale that Bessières declined also to give Montbrun the free use of Lepic's brigade of cavalry of the Guard. Probably this is true also, for the writer in Maxwell's *Peninsular Sketches* remarks that he never saw the Horse Grenadiers again after his first sight of them soon after dawn.

1811. In so perilous a situation Wellington had to decide May 5. whether he would sacrifice the blockade of Almeida or his communications with the Coa, and without hesitation chose the latter alternative. He therefore sent orders to Houston to fall back north-westward across the Turones towards Freineda, and to Craufurd and the cavalry to cover the manœuvre. At the same time checking the northward movement of the First and Third Divisions, he bade them fall back at right angles to their former alignment and take post along a rocky comb which runs east and west from Fuentes de Oñoro to the Turones, thus presenting a new front to the south. By this arrangement his line of battle was changed to the shape of the letter L, his right being thrown back, and his right flank more or less secured by the deep chasm of the Coa. The manœuvre was a delicate one in face of such an enemy as Massena ; and all depended upon the steadiness of the cavalry and still more of the Light Division.

Houston, having been rejoined by the two battalions that had been driven from Poço Velho, seems to have slipped away with little trouble into the valley of the Turones, where he was hidden from view ; wherefore leaving Sontag's brigade on the east side of the water, he passed over with the remaining brigade to the west and established himself between the stream and Freineda. The only approach to a mishap during the operation was that a Portuguese battery, misled by the blue uniform of the Brunswickers, opened fire upon them with shrapnel shell as they retired, though happily, owing to their being in open order, without touching a man.¹ The division, with the exception of the two battalions which had been in Poço Velho, had suffered

¹ The writer in *Peninsular Sketches* draws a ludicrous picture of the consternation of the German officer who commanded the battery, first because he had shed the blood of his countrymen, and secondly, when this fear proved to be groundless, because his fire had proved so ineffective. The incident furnishes an instructive comment on the capriciousness of spherical shrapnel ; for the shells were seen to burst over the heads of the Brunswickers.

very little, having no more than ninety-two casualties ; 1811. though the Eighty-fifth had lost a quarter of its scanty May 5. numbers and the 2nd Caçadores fully one-sixth. Moreover, Julian Sanchez joined the force that was in Freineda, so that Wellington's right flank guard was by no means contemptible in numbers.

Meanwhile the Light Division underwent the supreme trial of retirement across the open plain. For a moment it seemed as if the French infantry were about to take a share in the fight at this point, for their skirmishers suddenly pushed the British riflemen out of the wood where they had long engaged them, and the green-jackets had to run at the top of their speed to the nearest square of the Fifty-second in order to escape being cut off by the French horse. Marchand, however, bore away to his right against the new line formed by Wellington to west of Fuentes de Oñoro ; and it was high time for Craufurd to withdraw. Montbrun seeing nothing before him but infantry upon ground most favourable to cavalry, and having also twelve guns with him, let loose his squadrons to overwhelm the Light Division. To one who has seen the ground it seems almost miraculous that Craufurd should ever have been able to draw his men off ; yet he did so, and that by no miracle, but by sheer skill and resolution on the part of himself and of Cotton. Massing his battalions into close column of companies, so that they could form square at any moment, and throwing out riflemen on his flank to check the French skirmishers in the scrub, he withdrew them slowly and in perfect order over the plain, screened by a line of British horse. If the French brought their guns forward, it was the cavalry and Bull's battery that suffered ; and the British dragoons, remembering how the infantry had saved them earlier in the day, willingly sacrificed themselves.¹ The French squadrons, some three thousand strong, swarmed round the squares at a

¹ The writer in Maxwell's *Peninsular Sketches* justly lays stress on the devotion of the cavalry at this critical time.

1811. respectful distance, shouting and gesticulating, but never May 5. dared to deliver their threatened attack, for Craufurd's columns were never broken nor even shaken. Hardly a cannon-shot can have touched them, for their casualties when the day was ended amounted only to sixty-seven among the seven battalions of British and Portuguese, so nobly did the cavalry fulfil their duty.¹ A moment's weakness, a moment's wavering would have been fatal to them, but all were stern and steadfast in that proud retreat ; and having endured the trial for three long miles the Light Division came safely into its place in rear of the Guards, halted, and faced about. No more masterly manœuvre is recorded of any general ; no grander example of triumphant discipline is recorded of any regiments in the history of the British Army.

The cavalry passed in rear of the new line and had just dismounted, when some French hussars of Fournier's brigade, perceiving a knot of skirmishers from the Guards extended before the line of Stopford's brigade, swooped down upon them and after a sharp struggle swept off about a hundred of them ; whereupon two squadrons of the Royals and Fourteenth charged down, released some of the Guardsmen, and took twenty-five of the French prisoners. This was the only solid success of the French cavalry during the day. Montbrun hovered about in front of Wellington's right wing, and his troopers skirmished, as it was called, with the British horse, presumably by firing erratic shots at them from the saddle. Once a body of brave men made a dash upon Thompson's battery on the right of the Guards ; but they were shattered to pieces by grape-shot, and were fain to retire. Once another party made a feeble attempt upon the Forty-second, which repelled them without forming square. After a time the cavalry drew off, and the enemy confined themselves to a cannonade at long range, the shot flying over

¹ It is noteworthy that Simmons (*A British Rifleman*, p. 181) deplores that the Light Division was not hotly engaged at Fuentes de Oñoro.

Wellington's first line, but doing some execution in the 1811. second. The British artillery soon replied, both sides May 5. making beautiful practice ; but Wellington, having a superior number of guns, was able to overpower the French fire. It seems to have been in the course of this duel of artillery that a Captain Knipe of the Fourteenth, who had a theory that cavalry should always charge a battery in front, put his ideas into practice with his own squadron and a squadron of the Royals. The attempt was of course unsuccessful, and cost Knipe his own life and the lives of several men and horses.¹ With such incidents the attack on Wellington's right died away. The columns of the Sixth and Eighth Corps were now massed within cannon-shot over against the Third and First Divisions, with clouds of skirmishers out ; but no serious movement was made beyond an advance of sharp-shooters along the valley of the Turones, which was easily and quickly repelled by four companies of Riflemen under Captain O'Hare. Massena was not yet disposed to deliver his assault on this side ; nor was he wrong. For Wellington's right wing, following the contour of the ground, had the village of Fuentes de Oñoro rather in advance of its left, while its right was thrown forward somewhat from its centre towards the valley of the Turones, so that to assail this wing before capturing the village would have been practically to attack a re-entrant angle before carrying the salient.

Massena's instructions, as we have seen, were that Ferey and the Ninth Corps were to risk nothing at Fuentes de Oñoro ; but from three to four hours after the opening of the action on the British right,² when all seemed to be going well with the French, the Marshal

¹ The writer in Maxwell's *Peninsular Sketches*, who was in Knipe's squadron, declares that he never could see the object of this attack. Mr. Oman (iv. 327) places the incident earlier in the day.

² Napier says two hours ; the *Journal of a Soldier of the 71st* gives the hour at about half-past nine, and represents the action on the right as beginning at about six ; Koch gives the time at eleven o'clock.

1811, gave the order to storm the village. Ferey accordingly May 5, assaulted the front, while three picked battalions of Claparède's division fell upon it on Ferey's left under cover of a heavy fire of artillery. The French rushing forward with characteristic impetuosity drove the Seventy-first and Seventy-ninth after a sharp struggle from the lower houses, and, cutting off two companies of the latter regiment, made the whole of them prisoners. The rest of the Highlanders, however, rallied on the upper ground by the church, and being reinforced by the Twenty-fourth took the offensive and thrust the enemy back to the buildings by the river. Again the French came on, and the struggle began once more with desperate fury, every inch of ground being disputed, until the British were at last pushed back to the uppermost margin of rocks and houses, from whence they could not be dislodged. Wellington now set about drafting several of the light companies of the First and Third Divisions, together with the 6th Caçadores, into the village, while d'Erlon summoned several battalions from the divisions of Conroux and Claparède for a decisive assault. The streets were clogged with dead and wounded of both sides, upon whom the French artillery poured an incessant shower of round shot and grape; but the heavy column of fresh men from the Ninth Corps stormed through every obstruction. In the conflict that followed, Colonel Cameron of the Seventy-ninth, the soul of the defence and the darling of his regiment, was shot dead; and by a final supreme effort the French swept the British from their little citadel, and halted in close column upon the ground that they had won on the summit of the plateau.

They did not stay there long. The British troops, although forced back, were still firing at them, while a British battery behind the village tore great gaps through their ranks. This punishment the Ninth Corps endured unmoved, as became brave men of France. But General Edward Pakenham of the staff had galloped

up to Wellington to ask leave to bring up the Eighty-eighth ; and presently the Irishmen came down the road in column of sections at the double, with Generals Mackinnon, Pakenham, and above all their Colonel, Wallace, at their head. Instantly they closed with the French 9th Light Infantry. For a brief space the 9th stood firm, but presently gave way, the Eighty-eighth following hard at their heels with the bayonet ; while the Seventy-fourth, also of Mackinnon's brigade, dashed in upon the French at another point. The former defenders of the village swarmed after them, and the Seventy-ninth took revenge for their dead colonel. The fighting was savage. One party of over a hundred French grenadiers ran down into a barricaded street from which there was no escape ; and every one of them was bayoneted by the Irish. The rest were driven headlong over the water ; and more than one of the British followed them in the heat of the chase, to fall dead on the French side of the stream. D'Erlon brought forward his few remaining battalions to cover the rout ; but he made no further attempt to capture the village, though his batteries still played furiously upon it. Undaunted by crumbling walls and quaking rafters, the Seventy-fourth and Eighty-eighth fortified themselves among the ruins until at length the fire ceased ; for the battle of Fuentes de Oñoro was over.¹

Massena in his report of the action asserted that his supply of ammunition was too scanty to warrant an attack upon Wellington's right wing, and that for this reason he did not order it. The real truth is that he was at the end of his resources. While the assault upon Fuentes de Oñoro was at its height, he had dismounted and wandered up and down among the skirmishers, looking for a weak point on Wellington's eastern front

¹ The best accounts of the defence and recapture of Fuentes de Oñoro are in Grattan's *Adventures of the Connaught Rangers*, vol. i., *Journal of a Soldier of the 71st*, and Jameson's *Historical Record of the 79th*.

1811. but unable to find it. On the French right, Reynier, May 5. pursuant to orders, had attempted no more than slight and unimportant skirmishes with the British light troops over against him ; and indeed he could not have done more since the divisions of Erskine and Campbell were fresh and ready to repel him. In the centre three entire French divisions—some fourteen thousand men—had been absorbed in an unsuccessful effort to carry a single strong post with fourteen hundred yards of front. They had probably lost no more than fourteen hundred men ; but Ferey's division, which had suffered most severely on the 3rd as well as on the 5th, can have had little stomach for more fighting ; Claparède's had lost many men and officers of its choicest battalions, the massed grenadiers ; and even Conroux's had tasted defeat. There was therefore no hope for Massena of carrying the salient angle, and as a natural consequence no possibility of assailing the re-entrant on his left. It was clear that the relief of Almeida, which was the object of the battle, was unattainable and must be abandoned.

May 6. On the morning of the 6th the Light Division replaced the Seventy-fourth and Eighty-eighth in Fuentes de Oñoro, and busied itself with restoration of the defences ; while along the entire line of the right wing, from the village to the Turones, earthworks were thrown up, with fortifications of greater strength in rear of Fuentes de Oñoro. Dawn of the 6th showed both armies unmoved in their positions ; but Massena had already resigned himself to the dereliction of Almeida, by using the convoy, with which he had designed to revictual the fortress, for the subsistence of his army. The day was occupied in the removal of the wounded and the burial of the dead which, owing to the extreme heat of the weather, were poisoning the air.

May 7. The 7th brought no change in the situation, though it saw the completion of Wellington's field-works ; but Massena was utilising the time in the attempt to send messengers into Almeida with directions to General

Brennier to blow up the fortifications and to bring off his 1811 garrison, if possible, by stealth. Three French soldiers volunteered to undertake this dangerous service, of whom two were caught in disguise and shot, but the third contrived to creep into the fortress. Three salvoes fired at ten o'clock on the night of the 7th apprised Massena that his orders had been received ; and the Marshal gave the command for retreat before daybreak. The movement was carried out gradually and reluctantly, for Massena hoped to keep troops within easy distance of Almeida ; but both generals and soldiers put pressure on him to move ; and early on the morning of the 10th May 10. he withdrew the whole of his force across the Agueda, the Sixth and Ninth Corps to Ciudad Rodrigo, and the Second to the bridge of Barba del Puerco. Then, and not till then, could Wellington fairly claim that he had won a victory.

The casualties on the side of the Allies in the action of the 5th amounted to fifteen hundred and twenty-two, including two hundred and fifty-nine Portuguese, and on the French side to twenty-one hundred and ninety-two.¹ The regiments of Stopford's, Nightingall's, and Howard's brigades all suffered appreciably from the cannonade ; their losses, except when they had taken a leading part in the defence of Fuentes de Oñoro, varying

¹ These numbers are slightly greater than those shown in Mr. Oman's return, but being extracted from the *Gazette* are no doubt correct. The detailed figures are :

British.

Killed . . .	9 officers,	139 N.C.O. and men.			
Wounded . . .	52 "	820 "	"	"	"
Missing . . .	6 "	236 "	"	"	"

Portuguese.

Killed . . .	0	"	50	"	"
Wounded . . .	7	"	151	"	"
Missing . . .	0	"	51	"	"

French.

Killed . . .	28	"	239	"	"
Wounded . . .	123	"	1755	"	"
Missing . . .	1	"	46	"	"

1811. from five-and-thirty to seventy, while the Seventy-May. fourth and Eighty-eighth of Picton's division lost each of them over fifty of all ranks. But the only two battalions which were really severely punished were the Seventy-first and Seventy-ninth, with one hundred and twenty-seven and two hundred and fifty-six casualties, out of four hundred and nine hundred present respectively. Though in the Seventy-first thirty-nine, and in the Seventy-ninth ninety-four out of the numbers lost were prisoners, nevertheless the balance is sufficiently high to show that these two corps fought with the utmost gallantry and devotion. Two critics in the Light Division, however, Napier and Costello, while doing full justice to their conduct, averred that the Highlanders, being unused to the work of light infantry, exposed themselves far more than they ought, firing in sections in the streets instead of taking cover behind walls and windows ; and it is probable that this is true, for the superstition of "shoulder to shoulder" is hard to kill among the feathered bonnets. The cavalry, considering all things, escaped cheaply with one hundred and forty-four of all ranks, besides over one hundred horses, killed and wounded, and five captured. On the French side the losses of individual corps are unascertainable ; but in the Sixth Corps there fell just over nine hundred, and in the Ninth Corps something over eight hundred of all ranks, while Montbrun's cavalry division acknowledged three hundred and fifty casualties. But the most remarkable feature on the French side is that their loss in officers was nearly triple that of the British, twenty-eight killed against nine, and one hundred and fifty-one wounded against fifty-seven.

When the commissioned ranks are obliged to sacrifice themselves in undue proportion, it means almost invariably that the rank and file are slow to follow them ; and it should seem that the French, whether through the discouragement of their long retreat from Portugal or owing to the dissensions of their commanders, did themselves but scanty justice in this action. Colonel

Elley noticed that on the 3rd their attack on the village 1811. "didn't evince much spirit"; and so it was also on May. the 5th. Whether one follows Montbrun's cavalry over the plain of Poço Velho, or the infantry of Ferey, Marchand and Drouet both there and in the village of Poço Velho, one is sensible of a lack of the usual *élan* in the French attack. Such a failing generally filters down from above into the ranks of an army; and, though the ability of Massena's manœuvres was unquestionable, he seems to have executed them with no great confidence. According to his despatch, he was under the impression that Wellington had brought back with him the whole of Beresford's force from Badajoz; and it is certain not only that he credited the British commander with ten thousand men more than he actually possessed, but behaved as if those ten thousand were present in the field. Nevertheless, it was not the General-in-Chief alone, much shaken by advancing years and past wounds and hardships, who showed indecision. He was far outdone by Montbrun, a brilliant officer, who was little past his fortieth year. Personally I cannot conceive what this general was about when he failed to press home his movement on the British right flank. The British cavalry were a mere handful of men on horses that could hardly gallop, and they never charged except in small bodies of one, two, or at most three squadrons at a time. Yet they held twice and thrice their numbers, artillery as well as cavalry, at bay for two or three hours, were never broken past rallying, and finally withdrew, when their work was done, without extravagant loss. For all this it is very difficult to account, and I can find no explanation for it except that grim comment, written by Wellington to his brother William, "If Boney had been there we should have been beaten."¹

¹ "No considerable body of our cavalry was brought together to oppose them, they being so numerous, but an occasional two or three squadrons charged when there was an opportunity." *Londonderry MSS.* C. Stewart to Castlereagh, 8th May 1811. And see

1811. After such a confession as this, it is unprofitable May. to defend Wellington's dispositions, though it may well be doubted whether he would have risked this action in Napoleon's presence. The criticisms of Napier, as to the effect that would have been produced if the attack upon Wellington's right had been properly developed and thrust home, are difficult to refute, and indeed were made by members of his head-quarters staff within a day or two of the action. The same officers, long before Napier wrote, perceived the danger which would have followed if Massena had thrown part of his cavalry on to Wellington's line of communications, cut off his supplies, and forced him to recross the Coa at the most disadvantageous places. It may in fact be asserted that, in the abstract, Wellington's decision to accept battle was indefensible, nor do I suppose that he would have taken it had he not been moved by other than military considerations—by the belief, namely, that, unless he could give the British public a successful general action at once in order to hearten them to their task, they would insist on the recall of the British army in the Peninsula. Indeed the chief misfortune of the miscarriage of his combinations at Sabugal was that it forced him, against his better judgment, to hazard the action of Fuentes de Oñoro.

Nevertheless, apart from all considerations of strategy and policy, it is not easy to explain how Wellington, the greatest commander of his time on a battle-field, can have been guilty of the tactical blunder of leaving his right flank uncovered in the first place, and in the second of committing its defence to his worst troops; for Houston's division for the most part had never

Supp. Desp. vii. 177. Wellington to Wellesley Pole, "Our cavalry had not a gallop in them, while some of that of the enemy was fresh and in excellent condition." The extravagant lies of all the French narratives—that two squares of the Light Division were broken and captured, that three battalions of the Guards laid down their arms, and so forth—all point to the fact that the French cavalry ought to have done far more than it did.

seen a shot fired and was composed chiefly of foreign battalions. It is true that he presently reinforced them May by his best infantry; but this hardly excuses the original mistake of isolating them on weak ground from his main body. The error, however, is to a great extent redeemed by the amazing coolness and skill with which he corrected it in the formation of his new front. Enough has been said of the behaviour of the Light Division and of the cavalry at this most critical period of the battle; but it must be added that troops will only accomplish these wonders for a commander in whom they have most perfect trust. It would probably be not untrue to say further that the French generals held Wellington in such respect and were so suspicious of the man who habitually kept his army concealed, that they dared not take full advantage of his blunder. For the rest, it is only just that in future greater credit should be given to the four regiments of cavalry which took part in this battle, namely the Royals, the Fourteenth and Sixteenth Light Dragoons, and the 1st Hussars of the German Legion. They, together with Bull's battery of Horse Artillery, and not the infantry, are the real heroes of Fuentes de Oñoro.

The victory having been won or, it would be more accurate to say, having been ascertained, it remained to gather its fruits in the shape of the French garrison of Almeida. Wellington therefore pushed the Light Division and cavalry forward at daybreak of the 10th to take up the line of outposts on the Agueda, sent back the Sixth Division to relieve Pack's brigade in the duty of blockading Almeida, and ordered Erskine to detach a battalion of the Fifth Division to block the bridge at Barba del Puerco. Very confident in his own powers, Campbell begged that he might be allowed to make his dispositions for himself without interference. Accordingly on the evening of the 10th he placed his three brigades in the villages round Almeida; Burne's at Malpartida, three miles to north-east of the fortress, to watch the road to Barba del Puerco; Madden's at

1811. Junça, three miles to south-east ; and Pack's brigade May 10. at Cinco Villas, from four to five miles to north-westward. From these centres the picquets were organised in three divisions, right, centre, and left, each under a field-officer who had full discretion to act for himself, with a reserve of two hundred men always in rear. The criticism passed upon these arrangements at the time was that Cinco Villas and Junça were far from any line which the garrison of Almeida was likely to take if they endeavoured to escape. The point which they would try to gain would be the bridge over the Agueda, some ten miles to north-east as the crow flies, but full fourteen following the wanderings of the road.

Throughout the 8th and 9th Brennier busied himself with the sinking of mines to blow up the fortifications and with the destruction of his guns, which latter process he contrived ingeniously to accomplish under the guise of firing salvos. On the morning of the 10th he called his troops together and appealed to them to make a great effort ; and at about half-past eleven at night, having kindled the trains of his mines, he sallied out at the north gate with some fourteen hundred men in two columns. The whole moved off in the profoundest silence, avoiding all obvious roads and tracks, under the guidance of Brennier himself, who set his course by the position of the moon and checked his position from time to time by the various waters, all flowing from south to north, which he crossed on his way. The heads of both columns had just run into the chain of the Allied picquets, midway between the posts of the 1st Portuguese on their right and those of the Second Queen's on their left, when at a little past midnight the mines exploded and gave a general alarm. The 1st Portuguese fired, but were struck down or swept away with the bayonet without any pause, pursuant to Brennier's orders ; and the French passed on without the slightest check. Explosions and petty affairs of outposts had been so common of late

that the commanders of the right and left divisions 1811. of picquets—the Portuguese Colonel do Rego and May 10-11. the British Colonel Iremonger of the Queen's—took not the slightest notice. Others, however, were less supine. Pack, coming up just after the French had passed, at once pursued them with eighty of the reserve, sending orders to other regiments to follow him, and keeping up a constant fire to shew the way. Colonel Douglas marched immediately from Junça with the 8th Portuguese for Barba del Puerco. General Campbell instantly got the Thirty-sixth at Malpartida under arms, and marched as well as he could in the track of Pack's party. Pack himself hung on to Brennier's skirts, picking up stragglers and waggons and impeding the French as far as was possible with such small numbers; but no insult could induce the French general to take the offensive and fire a shot. So rapidly, moreover, did the French move, that by daylight only twelve of Pack's party remained with him; but an officer, who had joined him on the way, galloped forward to give the alarm to a detachment of the Royal Dragoons at Villar de Ciervos; and these striking in at the head of the two French columns delayed Brennier for some minutes. The check enabled Campbell to gain some ground; and, being joined by the Fourth Foot under Colonel Bevan, he arrived within half a mile of Barba del Puerco, and made a push to cut off Brennier from the bridge. He was too late; and by simple ill-fortune Colonel Douglas, having arrived before him at Barba del Puerco and found all quiet there, had turned back to seek the enemy elsewhere. Brennier therefore continued his march under a heavy fire, which cost him very many killed and wounded, until Reynier sent down three battalions and some guns to cover his passage of the water. Colonel Cochrane of the Thirty-sixth foolishly led an attack against these fresh troops, and was repulsed with a loss of thirty-five wounded and prisoners; and with this mishap the pursuit came to an end. Brennier's casualties were three hundred and sixty men killed

1811. or taken, besides the whole of his baggage ; but he May 11. led one thousand soldiers triumphantly into Massena's camp, earning high honour both from friend and foe for a most skilful and gallant feat of arms.

Wellington's wrath and mortification were extreme ; for this wretched affair practically converted the action of Fuentes de Oñoro into a defeat. It was, he said, the most disgraceful military event that had yet occurred to the British army in the Peninsula, and in his letters he lashed out right and left against the stupidity of "gallant officers" of all ranks who rendered useless all operations which were not directed by himself in person. The officer primarily responsible seems to have been Erskine, who neglected to transmit the orders for the Fourth to proceed to Barba del Puerco until midnight ; but in reporting this neglect to Liverpool, Wellington mentioned that Colonel Bevan had missed his road to that post, and that, if he had not done so, Brennier must have been intercepted and taken. Poor Bevan, who was a good officer, took this reproach so much to heart that he shortly afterwards shot himself ; and the army at large, which hated Erskine, did not hesitate to say that Bevan had been sacrificed to save his superior. Without, however, in any degree condoning Erskine's fault, this seems to be absurd. Bevan received his orders shortly before midnight ; his quarters were two miles and a half from the point which he was ordered to occupy ; Brennier did not reach Barba del Puerco until some time after daylight—say four o'clock—and yet the Fourth was not in position to stop him. With these figures before us, added to the fact that there was moonlight, it is merely childish to contend that something did not go amiss with Bevan's column, though possibly by the poor man's misfortune rather than his fault. But censure was by no means confined to Erskine and Bevan. Cotton held that Campbell was chiefly to blame, for after all it was he who commanded the blockade ; and Wellington evidently in some measure shared Cotton's opinion. Campbell for his part blamed

Colonel Iremonger of the Queen's, who had stood still ^{1811.} when he ought to have pursued ; and it is pretty clear May 11. that in this case likewise Wellington sympathised with Campbell, for five weeks later Iremonger was still addressing letters to the Commander-in-Chief to point out that the enemy could not have passed near the right of the Queen's. The truth is that a great many officers were to blame, Campbell probably most of all ; yet that not all Brennier's skill and constancy could have saved the garrison but for the mischance that brought Douglas too early to Barba del Puerco, and led him, after the example of Nelson at Alexandria, to run away in search of an enemy who was marching straight into his arms.¹

This incident ended the campaign of Fuentes de Oñoro, and by a strange coincidence the military career of Massena also. For on the 10th of May General Foy arrived at Ciudad Rodrigo from Paris bearing, unknown to himself, the Emperor's orders for the supreme command of the Army of Portugal to be transferred to Marmont, Duke of Ragusa. Massena was furious, and not without justice, for in the face of overwhelming difficulties he had accomplished wonders ; but, when the first bitterness of supersession was passed, he must have been thankful to be delivered from a most ungrateful duty. Marmont withdrew his army, now more than ever afflicted by dissension and discouragement, towards Salamanca ; and on the 14th Wellington detached the Third and Seventh Divisions to Beresford's support in Alemtejo, purposing himself to follow them in a few days. On the 16th, in consequence of letters received from Sir William, he decided to start at once ; and on the next day, upon the arrival of yet another message, he pushed on with all speed. "There is no very particular intelligence in the letters," he wrote to Spencer, "but I see that Beresford does not like his situation,

¹ *Wellington Desp.*, ed. 1852, v. 14-21, 15th May 1811; *Wellington MSS.*, Iremonger to Wellington, 17th June 1811; *Life of Lord Combermere*, i. 198.

1811. and I think it best to go to him." It is time, therefore, for us also to return to the south, to see what Wellington found there at his coming, and to describe how the position of affairs in that quarter had been brought about.

CHAPTER VI

OUR last sight of Soult was upon his return to Seville 1811, after the capture of Badajoz, in consequence of the March 14. British victory at Barrosa. He had not been in the city above a fortnight when he received news of Beresford's March 30. invasion of Estremadura and of his success at Campo Maior ; but, hearing also of the British General's delay in crossing the Guadiana, he appears to have taken no measures for the rescue of Badajoz until the 25th of April 25. April.¹ By that time his communications with that city had been severed for a fortnight by Beresford's cavalry ; while the audacious raids of Colborne with a force of two thousand men, magnified by the French to more than twice that number, had carried dismay even into the district of Cordova. At the end of the month, therefore, Soult began to collect troops for a march northward ; and, being very imperfectly informed as to the movements of Blake, he thought it quite possible that by a rapid advance he might cut off both the army of that general and Colborne's detachment. Meanwhile, for the operations generally, he considered that a force of five and twenty thousand men would suffice to drive the British across the Guadiana and open the way for d'Erlon, who, it will be remembered, had been ordered by Napoleon to join the Army of Andalusia. Of the number required the Fifth Corps, recently collected at Constantina, furnished ten thousand ; and the remainder was made up by taking four battalions and two regiments of cavalry from the First Corps, as many

¹ Ducasse, viii. 4.

1811. battalions and three regiments of cavalry from the Fourth Corps, and nine battalions and two regiments of cavalry from Godinot's division, which held the province of Cordova. But to raise even this small force Soult was obliged to entrust the custody of such important centres as Seville, Cordova, and Jaen to a few of the worst of his French troops, aided by such untrustworthy Spaniards as had sworn allegiance to King Joseph.

Some days were necessary to get together the contingents of Victor, Sebastiani, and Godinot ; but by the 8th of May all were assembled at Seville, and before May 10. one o'clock on the morning of the 10th the troops were on march northward. Moving very rapidly by Santa Olalla and Monesterio, Soult on the 12th was between Fuente de Cantos and Bienvenida, where he was joined by the force of Latour Maubourg, which had advanced simultaneously from Constantina. So far the French had encountered only the Spanish patrols, which fell back May 13. at their approach without resistance ; but on the 13th near Villafranca they came upon the outposts of the British cavalry under General Long, which also retired steadily before them, first to Almendralejo and then westward to Santa Marta. On the same day Beresford himself moved from Badajoz with the Second Division, Hamilton's Portuguese and three batteries to Valverde, a good central position from which to observe the three roads open to Soult, namely those by Valverde itself on the west, by Albuera in the centre, and by Almendralejo in the east. Here the Spanish Generals, Blake and Castaños, met him in conference and, generously waiving all claim to the command in chief, agreed to serve under Beresford and to concentrate, pursuant to May 14. his advice, at Albuera. On the 14th the advanced guard of the French came up to Almendralejo ; and on May 15. the 15th, following the course of the British, it turned westward, appearing about Santa Marta not long before noon, whereupon Long again drew back, in the judgment of Beresford and of his staff, with unjustifiable haste and insufficient resistance. On the road Long received

orders to repair to Albuera, whither Beresford had already summoned his own troops from Valverde, as well as all the force before Badajoz, excepting the Fourth Division and the Spanish brigade of Castaños.

The position of Albuera is, so to speak, the tail of a range of low heights which runs southward from Badajoz for some fourteen miles. Approaching it, as Soult did, from Santa Marta and the south-east, the road passes over a plain, much covered by olive trees, evergreen oak and scrub, which slopes very gently down to the Albuera stream and crosses it by a bridge about three hundred yards above the village of that name. The village itself is situated upon a knoll on the western bank, which descends by an almost precipitous though short declivity to the water ; it is of considerable size, with a church thrice as lofty as the surrounding houses, and is enclosed by an unusually high wall. The stream itself, whose general course is from south to north, is at this point a mere brook, fordable anywhere in the summer ; and though its banks in many places descend very steeply to the water, especially below Albuera, they are easily passable in others. A very little way above the bridge its volume is still further reduced by resolution into two tributaries, the Chicapierna on the west and the Nogales on the east. The peninsula between these two rills seems at first sight to be flat, though as a matter of fact it has a gentle elevation of about one hundred and sixty feet ; and, being covered with scrub, it is exceedingly blind. From the left bank of the Chicapierna the ground rises westward in very easy undulations to a ridge, which ripples up and down from north to south at altitudes varying from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet above the river. On the reverse or western side of this ridge there is a slightly steeper slope downward to another shallow depression, from which another wave rises again very gradually to rather greater height, and flows away into a heathery upland. At the foot of this shallow depression is a water-course fringed with thin low scrub, dry except in

1811. the very wettest weather,¹ with no banks to speak of, May 15. not above four feet broad, and with perfectly sound bottom. This water-course, an obstacle which would not turn a calf three days old, is the feature which Napier termed in doubtful Spanish the "Aroya," and which, in spite of frequent corrections, he maintained to the last to be a "valley" which might delay and embarrass the march of an army. It remains to be added that, though the ground to east of the waters is thickly studded with trees, that on the west of them is absolutely bare and given up to grass and crops of grain, until in rear, that is to say to west, of the position this grass gives place to heather.

The Allied infantry from Valverde reached Albuera between one and two in the afternoon,² and was at once placed in position ; Alten's brigade of Germans in Albuera itself, and the Second Division under William Stewart on the ridge in rear of the village, with its right brigade upon a hill known as the Conical Hill immediately to west of Albuera, and the two remaining

¹ It was dry when I saw it after fourteen consecutive wet days, on the 12th of May 1903. Mr. Oman describes this feature quite correctly as a "bottom where a lush growth of grass along a certain line may indicate the course of a rivulet in very wet weather." I examined it more closely because a "lush growth of grass" may mean boggy ground ; but, as I say, it was perfectly sound. I could see no reason why a squadron should not trot or even gallop across it in line with the men knee to knee, if the squadron leader took the common precaution of checking the pace slightly on approaching a belt of grass in a setting of heather. Yet Beresford calls the descent to the water-course from east to west "very steep" and "so abrupt a steep as to be only practicable for infantry," and "was satisfied that a great part of it would have been difficult to cavalry acting in corps" (*Further Strictures*, pp. 113, 152). This is sheer nonsense. The ascent to the summit of Napier's "fatal hill" from the water-course is about 200 yards, and the elevation of the summit above it may be 40 feet.

² D'Urban's narrative says about noon. Beresford's *Strictures* says between 1 and 2 P.M. His *Further Strictures* say that Stewart's Division did not arrive till between 2 and 4. Leslie's *Military Journal* says "in the afternoon." Sherer gives the hour as 5 P.M. D'Urban was an excellent officer ; but his *Narrative* does its utmost to defend Beresford, and is not always accurate.

brigades in line with it further to the north ; while 1811. Hamilton's Portuguese Division and Collins's Portuguese May 15. brigade prolonged the array northward parallel with the water. The whole were fronted to the east, and were so disposed that the left of the Second Division was astride the road to Badajoz, which was the line of Soult's advance, and the right astride the road to Valverde, which was the line of Beresford's retreat. To the right of Stewart a space was left to be occupied by Blake's Spaniards, when they should come up ; and therewith Beresford's arrangements for the present came to an end. Meanwhile, as the last relics of the siege-train from before Badajoz were to pass the Guadiana in the night, he ordered Cole's division and the three battalions of Carlos d'España's force, all of which were on the south bank of the river, to march for Albuera at two o'clock next morning. Kemmis's brigade, which was on the north bank, was to cross by the ford above Badajoz, or, if that were impracticable, to go round by Juromenha and Olivenza. As a matter of fact the ford proved to be impassable owing to a rise in the waters ; and hence the brigade was obliged to make the long circuit by Juromenha, with the result that, in spite of the utmost exertion, it did not reach Albuera until after daybreak of the 17th. From the indifference manifested by Beresford whether Kemmis should join him within twelve hours or within thirty-six, it should seem that he was as vague concerning his own intentions as he was ignorant concerning his enemy's.

Between two and three o'clock of the same afternoon the cavalry of the Allies arrived at the Albuera stream. The rear-guard throughout the retreat had been entrusted to the Spanish horse under the French Count Penne Villemur, which had been somewhat sharply pressed ; and it should seem that on nearing Albuera the Spaniards drew off, and were relieved by the Portuguese, who were presently driven in by the French advanced guard. A troop of the Thir-

1811. tenth Light Dragoons sufficed to thrust the French May 15. back in their turn. Long quite early in the day had sent word to Beresford that the French were advancing in force; and d'Urban in reply had ordered Long to maintain his ground on the right bank of the stream till the latest possible moment, and only to cross the water if hard beset. There seems, however, to have been some difference of opinion between the members of Beresford's staff upon this point; for the Adjutant-general, Colonel Rooke, directed Long to pass his regiments with all haste over the bridge and to abandon the right bank of the Albuera river altogether. Long obeyed, and the French at once occupied the deserted ground, with their picquets down to the water's edge. D'Urban, as Beresford's chief staff-officer, declared this dereliction of the right bank to be a grave mistake, as undoubtedly it was; and a few weeks later he went so far as to state, untruly, that in consequence of this incident Beresford had decided to supersede Long in the leadership of the cavalry by General Lumley. It is, however, certain that this change of command had already been decided upon on the previous day, so as to obviate any disputes concerning seniority with the Spanish brigades;¹ and it is equally true that the blunder, thus unhandsomely attributed by Beresford and d'Urban to Long, was really due to one of Beresford's own staff-officers. Many years later when the battle of Albuera had become a theme of bitter controversy, Beresford admitted that he had been wrong in omitting to station infantry in a wood, which was traversed by the road from Santa Marta, upon some heights on the eastern bank of the river. He pleaded however that he was unaware even that Long had left Santa Marta, though his Quarter-master-general had that very morning recalled him to Albuera; and that he was

¹ See d'Urban's letter of 14th May 1811, in Long's *Second Letter to Beresford*, p. 79; and his letter of 29th August 1811, quoted by Beresford in his *First Letter to C. E. Long*, p. 45.

amazed to find the cavalry withdrawing across the stream, although his Adjutant-general had in person directed the movement. Beresford's accounts of his own proceedings at this period are so contradictory that it is safer to believe that he knew nothing and was doing nothing.

However, it was certain that some part of Soult's army, of strength and composition unknown, was within striking distance, and that more than half the Allied force was not yet in the field. There was no sign of Blake, who lay at Almendral, not more than nine miles to south, and had promised to come at noon; wherefore Beresford temporarily occupied the ground, which he had assigned to the Spaniards, with cavalry and artillery,¹ and sent officers to quicken Blake's movements. Orders were also despatched to summon General Madden with four squadrons of Portuguese cavalry from Talavera la Real, about ten miles to north. Meanwhile Soult came up to his advanced guard, which consisted of no more than a weak brigade of six hundred sabres under General Brache, and reconnoitred Beresford's position. He could see very little beyond Alten's brigade in Albuera village and Otway's Portuguese cavalry in the plain half a mile or more beyond it to the north; but he knew that the Fourth Division was still before Badajoz, and he supposed Blake to be also far distant. He had in fact moved rapidly on purpose to catch Beresford with his army unconcentrated; and he therefore decided to attack on the morrow before more troops could join his enemy. He accordingly gave orders to his army, which was bivouacked at Santa Marta, to march before dawn.

So the night drew down, and at eleven o'clock—nearly twelve hours late—Blake's Spaniards began to appear on the field. Then, instead of forming on

¹ Leslie (*Military Journal*, p. 218) says that Hoghton's brigade was also moved to the right and formed *en potence*, and withdrawn on the morning of the 16th.

1811. the right of Stewart and in rear of the position, they May 15. blundered in the dark down to the front of it, and formed themselves in line with the supports of the advanced posts on the low ground.¹ It was three May 16. o'clock before the whole body of them, about twelve thousand of all ranks, came in and settled down thus in the wrong place. As soon, therefore, as the light had broken, it was necessary to shift them to their appointed station, and to relieve the cavalry and artillery which so far had occupied it ; an operation which took much time, owing, as d'Urban hints, to obstruction on the part of Blake. However, at last Beresford's dispositions were finally made along a front of about three miles. Hamilton's and Collins's Portuguese infantry, about nine thousand strong, were ordered to stand in two lines on the left, with Otway's cavalry, some six hundred sabres, on the plain in advance of them ; Stewart's division, about five thousand bayonets, in one line formed the centre ; Blake's three divisions, under Generals Lardizabal, Ballesteros, and Zayas, jointly about ten thousand strong, were in two lines on the right, with two battalions under Ballesteros upon a round knoll, in front and to the right of the main position ; and Loy's and Villemur's brigades of Spanish cavalry were thrown out wide on the right flank. The place assigned to the British cavalry was in rear of Stewart's right brigade. Beresford's guns upon the spot numbered four British, twelve German, twelve Portuguese, and six Spanish, in addition to which four more British pieces were accompanying Cole from Badajoz, making thirty-eight cannon altogether. Of these, one Portuguese battery was posted to command the bridge and road to Albuera, and the other was made over to the Portuguese infantry ; one German battery was placed on the summit of the conical hill in rear of the village ; Lefebure's troop of horse artillery accompanied the cavalry to the rear of the centre ; and the remaining guns

¹ Beresford's *Second Letter to C. E. Long*, p. 91.

appear to have been distributed among the Spaniards 1811. and the Second British Division. Altogether at day- May 16. break Beresford had an array of between twenty-nine and thirty thousand men, of whom eight thousand were British.

When taking up his position during the evening of the 15th on the ground allotted to Blake, General Long, who was not the most efficient of officers, perceived with amazement that, immediately to south of him and rather to his rear, the ridge ripples up to a height which out-tops that selected by Beresford for his extreme right, and commands it at a range of not more than five hundred yards. Beresford, according to his own account, had also noticed this fact and had thought of occupying the height in question, but had refrained because he found that, however much he might extend his right, it would be subject to the same disadvantage of a higher hill beyond it.¹ In occupying the ground as he did, however, he was guided principally by the assumption that Soult would attack his centre, for the double reason that the high road to Badajoz led straight upon it over the lowest and weakest part of the ridge, and that a successful attack upon that point would be more effective than the turning of a flank. “He thought better of his adversary’s judgment”—so he wrote many years after—“than to suppose that he would assail the right flank of the Allies.” Wellington, however, declared conclusively after going over the field that Beresford did not occupy the position as he should have done; and one of the staff, who accompanied Wellington over the ground, put the matter more crudely, probably from words which he had heard his chief let fall. “Beresford on the evening of the 15th seems not to have attempted to take up the ground in the manner which might have rendered it very formidable, but—like a Spanish army and officers—as the high road led from Albueria to Badajoz, he placed his army across it, as if this alone could stop the foe. From this period to the com-

¹ *Further Strictures*, p. 118.

1811. mencent of the battle his right seems to have been May 16. placed where his left should have been."¹

So matters stood in the early hours, dark with clouds and threatened rain, of the 16th of May. But from midnight onwards Soult's army had been tramping steadily forward from Santa Marta, four thousand horse and eighteen thousand foot, with fifty guns.² Beresford, who was astir betimes, caught sight of troops and cannon assembling in masses towards his right front, but felt little uneasiness, still thinking too well of his adversary's judgment to look for trouble in that quarter. Meanwhile Soult surveyed the position and laid his plans. The Allied troops were not hidden as on the previous day, but were drawn up as if for a grand review in full sight of the enemy, with the different nationalities plainly distinguished by their uniforms—Portuguese in blue on the left, British in scarlet in the centre, Spaniards in yellow and other bright colours on the right.³ Beresford, it seems, did not expect an attack, for it is certain that a

¹ Londonderry MS. C. Stewart to Castlereagh, 22nd May 1811.

² Soult's Army. 1st May 1811.

Cavalry: Latour Maubourg.

Briche's brigade : 2nd and 10th Hussars, 21st Chasseurs, all ranks	823
Bron's brigade : 4th, 20th, 26th Dragoons	1,093
Bouvier des Éclats's brigade : 14th, 17th, 27th Dragoons	879
Unattached Cavalry : 1st Lancers, 27th Chasseurs, 4th Spanish Chasseurs	1,217

Artillery and Engineers

<i>Infantry</i> . Fifth Corps.	1,233
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First Division. Girard.

2 and 3/34th Line ; 1 and 2/40th Line ; 1, 2, and 3/64th Line ; 2 and 3/88th Line	4,254
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Second Division. Gazan.

2 and 3/21st Light ; 1 and 2/100th Line ; 1, 2, and 3/28th Light ; 1, 2, and 3/103rd Line	4,183
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Brigade Werlé : 3 batts. each of 12th Light, 55th, 58th Line	5,621
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" Godinot : 3 batts. each 16th Light, 51st Line	3,924
11 grenadier cos. of First Corps	1,033

24,260

³ Leslie.

part of the cavalry were ordered to forage, and that some 1811. at any rate of the battalions were dismissed after morning May 16. parade.¹ Soult in his despatch declared that at this time he was still unaware of Blake's junction with Beresford, and that he decided to assail the right of the Allies in order to sever communications between the two. This statement may be dismissed as untrue; but the configuration of the ground and Beresford's dispositions amply justified and indeed invited such an attack upon tactical grounds, quite apart from all strategic considerations. Accordingly Soult resolved to employ Godinot's brigade of infantry and Briche's brigade of cavalry—say, thirty-six hundred foot and eight hundred horse—together with two batteries in a feint movement against the Allied centre; while the divisions of Gazan and Girard, concealed by the low hill and trees of the peninsula between the two waters, should sweep round, together with a strong force of cavalry, upon the Allies' right flank.

The action appears to have opened at about eight o'clock, when Godinot's brigade marched in two columns down the right bank of the stream towards the bridge, with two batteries and Briche's brigade of light cavalry in support, and Werlé's brigade of infantry in reserve. Presently the French infantry formed for attack opposite the bridge; their guns unlimbered and opened fire, and a body of lancers crossed the water. Long, who had not yet been superseded by Lumley, brought down the Third Dragoon Guards, who charged the lancers and drove them back; and meanwhile the Portuguese battery in rear of Albuera poured round shot with great effect into the dense French columns. Very soon Godinot's skirmishers were hotly engaged with Alten's Germans; and Beresford ordered down Cleeves's German battery and Colborne's brigade² to Alten's support, while Lar-

¹ Sherer, p. 27; Long's *Letter in Reply*, p. 118.

² Napier says that a Portuguese brigade was sent by Beresford's orders to Alten's support; Mr. Oman omits all mention of early reinforcements to Alten; but Leslie, who was in Hoghton's brigade

1811. *dizabal* likewise sent two Spanish battalions to the edge May 16. of the water. This was precisely what Soult desired ; and nothing could have served his purpose better.

Meanwhile the two divisions of the Fifth Corps, headed by a brigade of cavalry, were striding away under cover of the low wooded heights between the Nogales and the Chicapierna, fetching a wide compass southward before they turned north upon Blake's right flank. An aide-de-camp of General Zayas, however, perceived the gleam of bayonets among the trees,¹ and at Blake's command galloped away to the loftier hill immediately to south for a closer view. Thence he descried the hostile columns coming down to the Chicapierna, and returned in hot haste to warn his chief and Beresford. The latter at once repaired to the hill to make his own observations ; and, while he was thus engaged, the French cavalry which had accompanied Godinot crossed the water and swept rapidly up the right bank to the rear of Girard, while Werlé's six thousand men, countermarching, moved off in the same direction. The enemy's true intentions were now evident ; and Beresford directed Blake to change front to his right, advancing his first line to the crest of the next wave of ground to the south, level with the two advanced battalions of Ballesteros, and forming the second line in rear of it across the ridge originally occupied by his first line. He also sent the Thirteenth Light Dragoons to support the defence of the bridge and to cover Blake's left flank ; and finally he withdrew the rest of the British cavalry, which Long had brought down close to the stream, together with Villemur's squadrons, to the right rear of Blake's new front. At this moment Cole came up with Myers's brigade of the Fourth Division, three

next in line to Colborne's, says distinctly that Colborne's brigade was sent down ; and Cleeves's letter of 20th May 1811, printed in Beamish, i. 385, establishes the fact beyond all doubt.

¹ It should seem that the British vedettes saw the movement about the same time and reported it. See Napier's *Justification*, p. 34, and Long's *Letter in Reply*, p. 119.

weak companies which had been attached to it from 1811. Kemmis's brigade, and Harvey's Portuguese brigade. May 16. He was ordered to post his division half a mile in rear of the cavalry, of which Lumley now assumed the command. Beresford further directed the Second Division to move up to the support of Blake and, transferring Hamilton's Portuguese division to the western slope of the conical hill behind Albuera village, massed it there in close column as a reserve.

General Zayas, whose conduct throughout the day was admirable, appears to have begun the change of front even before Blake ordered him; and leading forward four battalions of the second line and a Spanish battery, he drew them up with skill and judgment at the very edge of a steep descent, posting two battalions of Spanish Guards in line in front, and the remaining two—Ireland and Navarre—in close column behind them. Blake, however, for no explicable reason, chose to assume that Soult's real attack was designed against the original front, and positively refused to carry the movement further,¹ sending an aide-de-camp to Beresford to announce the fact, and to ask for orders. Beresford, who was engaged with Hamilton far away to the north when the messenger reached him, hastily ended his instructions by giving that officer discretion to act as he thought best, and returned at the top of his speed to the Spaniards. Unable to find Blake, Sir William directed the completion of the change of front in person. Zayas first deployed the whole of his four battalions in the first line; and then there were gradually brought up on his right the three remaining battalions of Lardizabal, and on his left two from the brigade of Ballesteros. But even so Blake's obstinacy found the means to assert itself. Lardizabal did indeed recall his two detached battalions from Albuera; but the two of Ballesteros's brigade, which had been posted in

¹ This is Sir Henry Hardinge's testimony, which, though impugned by Beresford, seems to be true. Napier's *Justification*, pp. 25-26.

1811. advance of the original array, still remained in their old May 16. position fronting towards the river, while Don Carlos d'España, whose brigade had come up with Cole, was ordered to send one of his three weak battalions down to the bridge. Thus it was that the change of front was still incomplete and in process of formation when the French attack began.

For by this time the leading brigade of French horse had swept away Loy's cavalry, driven off the British outposts from the heights over against Zayas's new front, and pressed on far to west to cover the left flank of the French infantry. Two more brigades and a battery of howitzers followed it, and the whole, over three thousand strong, deployed into line, threatening at any moment to overwhelm Lumley's fourteen hundred sabres, sweep round Beresford's right flank, and drive him off the line of his retreat to Valverde. Meanwhile three batteries of artillery unlimbered on the summit of the height over against Zayas ; and below them the French infantry, covered by a cloud of skirmishers, swarmed up to the attack. So far Girard had advanced in what appeared to the British to be three columns ; and, elated by the easy dispersal of the Allied outposts, which apparently he conceived to be their first line, he judged that a single charge would suffice to win the battle. He therefore launched his division to the attack in the following formation. In the centre were four battalions, one behind the other in column of double companies, that is to say thirty-six ranks deep. On either flank of this column was a single battalion in line, three ranks deep ; and on either flank of these again a battalion and a half in column, probably of companies. In rear followed Gazan's division in four parallel columns, each of two or three battalions, one behind the other, and each with a frontage, apparently, of two companies. Expecting, no doubt, that the leading division would carry all before it, the rear division followed so closely as to be practically merged in the first. To all intents, therefore, the

assailing force presented a mass of some eight thousand men, with an extreme depth of anything from forty-five to sixty-three ranks, and a frontage of four hundred men.¹ In rear of them Werlé's brigade was held in reserve behind the hill occupied by the French artillery.

The French skirmishers were engaged with the Spaniards before the battalions of Ballesteros and Lardizabal were formed, with the result that the latter were never properly steadied in their new position. The fire of the French artillery did not help matters ; and it was most fortunate that Zayas, by anticipating Beresford's commands, had at least his own four battalions in good and orderly array, for it was not until after the action had begun in this quarter that Stewart received his instructions to move to the support of the Spaniards. Meanwhile the French skirmishers gradually cleared Zayas's front, and the main column, slowly advancing to the foot of the slope upon which he was posted, came to a halt and opened fire. Almost incredible though it may seem, nearly the entire depth of the column was firing simultaneously, the Spaniards being in view of all on the very edge of the crest, while the undulations of the ground enabled large numbers of the French to shoot safely over the heads of their comrades.² Exposed to this heavy fusillade and to a tempest of shot from the French batteries, the Spaniards stood most nobly, answering volley with volley, and in

¹ Girard's division numbered 4125 N.C.O. and men on the 1st of May. Taking its numbers, for convenience, at 4050 on the 16th of May, this would give an average strength of 450 to each of its 9 battalions. As the battalions were made up of six companies, this would give an average strength of 75 men to each company. The frontage in triple rank of a single company would then be 25 ; of a double company 50 ; of a battalion in line 150. Girard's front would therefore consist of $25 + 150 + 50 + 150 + 25 = 400$. If the 2 flank battalions were in column of double companies the frontage would be 450.

² Beresford's account of this (*Further Strictures*, p. 158) is very curious, and may, I think, be accepted as true, for there could be no object in lying about it. Compare Leslie, p. 221.

1811. fact repelled Girard's first onslaught.¹ The attack was, May 16, however, renewed, and after an hour or more of this work the Spaniards began to huddle themselves together into groups, one behind the other; and, although they did not break and fly, it seems certain that in, at any rate, parts of the line they had retired behind the shelter of the slope in some disorder, when at this critical moment the foremost brigade of the British Second Division came up.²

According to Beresford's account, he had ordered Stewart to form his division in second line in rear of the Spaniards; and it is possible that this assertion may be correct; but it may be doubted whether the Commander-in-Chief allowed time enough for any such movement. We have seen that Stewart received no instructions at all until some time after Soult had developed his flanking attack; and even then it was necessary to recall Colborne's brigade from the neighbourhood of Albuera before the whole could move; all of which incidents must have meant delay. In any case, it is certain that, from what cause or by whose fault soever, Stewart's three brigades came up to the new front in succession, and as fast as they could run in their wet clothing over the soaked and slippery grass.³ Colborne's was the first to arrive, being formed in column of companies, with Cleeves's German battery alongside it, and was guided by Stewart towards the right of the Spanish line but obliquely to it, as if to threaten the left flank of the French column. Cleeves unlimbered his guns on an eminence within eighty or ninety yards of the enemy and opened fire; and Stewart, who had unfortunately

¹ Beresford says that they stood for an hour and a half altogether.

² Beresford in his despatch reported that the Spaniards were driven from the position, and d'Urban confirms this. Beresford, however, sought afterwards to correct the statement, and his testimony may be accepted as accurate so far as he could see, which in the smoke and rain cannot have been very far.

³ Sherer mentions that before he came under fire his battalion stood at ease for some time under "heavy, chilling, and comfortless rain." Both Sherer and Leslie speak of the rapidity of the brigades' advance.

taken the command of the brigade out of the more 1811. competent hands of Colborne, hurried the foremost May 16. battalion—the Buffs—through the broken groups of Spaniards, and pushed it, while still in close formation, into the full blast of the French cannon-shot. The Buffs then deployed obliquely to the French flank and opened fire, whereupon the enemy's flanking battalions, which, it will be remembered, were in column, deployed to their left in three ranks and responded with as vigorous a fusillade. As Colborne's succeeding battalions came up, the Buffs appear to have moved forward to make room for them, until the Forty-eighth and Sixty-sixth also were aligned along the French flank and engaged with it in a savage duel of musketry.

So strenuous was the conflict that both sides became unsteady. The French, shattered by the British volleys, began to move back and were only with difficulty kept in place by their officers. The left of the British line, tormented alike by the French bullets and by showers of grape, dashed forward with the bayonet and was repulsed. Upon the whole, however, the British were gaining the advantage; and the right of their line now prepared to charge, with the greater chance of success as a dark cloud came over the battle-field and burst in a heavy storm of rain and hail. At this moment Latour Maubourg launched upon the flank and rear of Colborne's battalions two regiments of cavalry, the one of lancers and the other of hussars. In spite of the darkness the brigade had warning of the coming wrath and faced about to meet it. But the cry was raised that the horsemen were Spaniards; there was hesitation and delay; and before the mistake could be corrected, the enemy swept down upon them like a whirlwind with lance and sabre. In a few minutes the Buffs, Forty-eighth, and Sixty-sixth had disappeared as a fighting force, half of them killed and wounded and the remainder prisoners; and only the Thirty-first, which was still in column and beyond reach of the charge, escaped annihilation. The victorious lancers then pushed on against Cleeves's

1811. battery, speared or captured the gunners and took the May 16. guns ; though these, with the exception of one howitzer, were presently recovered. Finally, small groups of wandering horsemen, lost in the smoke and darkness, penetrated to the rear of the Spanish firing line, where they spread wide confusion among the men, and were like to have made an end of Beresford and of his staff. Sir William, indeed, only escaped in virtue of his prodigious bodily strength, which enabled him to parry a lance-thrust and heave the lancer who had aimed it at him out of the saddle, while his staff drew their swords and fought for their lives. After a time the storm cleared off, and Lumley sent two squadrons of the Fourth Dragoons upon the flank and rear of the disordered French cavalry. The British troopers made havoc of the weary men and steeds who had already been engaged, but were driven off in their turn by a fresh body of French horse with some little loss.¹ Altogether there was nothing to mar the success of the original terrific onset of the lancers and hussars.

After the disaster to the three battalions of Colborne's brigade, the surviving battalion, the Thirty-first, deployed with perfect steadiness and order as soon as the confusion had subsided, and continued to attack alone. Meanwhile Stewart's second brigade—that of Hoghton—had come up, led by the Twenty-ninth, and the battalions were closing themselves into quarter column of companies at the foot of the slope in rear of Zayas's line. The Forty-eighth² and Fifty-seventh, however, had not yet completed their formation when a body of Spaniards before them came rushing back, and was only with great difficulty rallied and stayed by the British officers. The brigade then deployed into line, but had hardly accomplished this manœuvre before the Spaniards once more came flying

¹ Mr. Oman is severe upon Napier for declaring that the charge of the Fourth Dragoons was successful ; but he only followed d'Urban who describes them as cutting to pieces the lancers and hussars.

² The first battalion. It was the second battalion which had just been cut up by the French lancers.

to the rear, this time with the lancers thrusting savagely 1811. among them. There was only one thing to be done, May 16. namely to fire impartially upon friend and foe ; and by this means Hoghton drove the lancers off ; but unfortunately the firing was taken up by Abercromby's brigade, which was forming on Hoghton's left. The mistake was excusable, for little could be seen through the smoke, and some of the Spaniards had turned round and fired at the lancers in their rear. With both difficulty and danger the fusillade was stopped by one of Beresford's staff ; and the four battalions of Zayas then passed through the British to the rear. They had stood under a terrible fire from enormously superior numbers for an hour and a half, remaining steadfast even when the British were firing into their rear ; they had fought very well and lost very heavily ; and their behaviour did them the highest honour.

Stewart then rode up to his two brigades and called for three cheers, which were given with great enthusiasm, and led them up the slope to the crest. The French sharp-shooters, who had now reached the top of the hill, opened a brisk fire upon them as they advanced, but soon retreated, though Stewart's men disdained to reply. Meanwhile Soult had ordered Girard's division to retire and Gazan's to take its place ; but, owing to the crowding of the column, the change was only with difficulty accomplished and the new array was never properly formed. Nevertheless the huge masses of men and artillery presented a sufficiently formidable appearance to the six red-coated battalions when, on their reaching the crest, the wind blew the smoke aside and for a moment revealed the enemy. The order of the British seems to have been as follows : On the extreme right were the Thirty-first, and then in succession the Twenty-ninth, Fifty-seventh, Forty-eighth, Twenty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, and Thirty-fourth, something over three thousand men in all, formed in double rank ; the first four battalions being on the summit of the ridge, and the remainder on the gentle

1811. slope that glides down eastward to the Albuera river.
May 16. Silently and steadily they advanced to within sixty yards
of the enemy, unsupported apparently as yet by any
artillery, and opened fire.

And then followed a duel so stern and resolute that it has few parallels in the annals of war. The survivors who took part in it on the British side seem to have passed through it as if in a dream, conscious of nothing but of dense smoke, constant closing towards the centre, a slight tendency to advance, and an invincible resolution not to retire. The men stood like rocks, loading and firing into the mass before them, though frightfully punished not so much by the French bullets as by grape-shot from the French cannon at very close range. The line dwindle^d and dwindle^d continually ; and the intervals between battalions grew wide as the men who were still on their legs edged in closer and closer to their colours ; but not one dreamed for a moment of anything but standing and fighting to the last. The fiercest of the stress fell upon Hoghton's brigade, wherein it seems that every mounted officer fell. Stewart, twice wounded, refused to quit the field. Hoghton, a difficult and quarrelsome man, who "had worked himself into misery and daily visited Beresford with lamentations,"¹ suddenly revealed himself as a hero in action. In the early part of the day, when his brigade was reassembled after its dismissal, he had appeared in a green frock-coat, and had changed it for scarlet without dismounting, under a heavy fire from the French artillery.² Soon he was struck by more than one bullet, but he remained in the saddle cheering his men, until his horse fell dead beneath him. "It is only his horse," cried Beresford, as Hoghton scrambled to his feet ; but a minute later the brigadier staggered and fell to rise no more. Colonel William Inglis of the Fifty-seventh was dressing his battalion before the attack when his horse was shot dead under him. He shook his feet clear of the stirrups without taking his eye off his

¹ Beresford to Wellington, 29th April 1811. *Wellington MSS.*

² This detail is from Maxwell's *Peninsular Sketches*, ii. 330.

men, and led them into action on foot. "Fifty-seventh, 1811. die hard!" was his adjuration to them ; and, when struck May 16. down by a grape-shot in the left breast, he lay on the ground among them, refusing all help, and continued to hearten them to the fight. Colonel Duckworth of the Forty-eighth was shot dead ; Colonel White and Major Way of the Twenty-ninth were wounded. A German officer at the height of the conflict came up with three guns, but could find no superior officer to direct him where to station them, and unlimbered where he thought best. Captains, lieutenants and ensigns, sergeants and rank and file all fell equally fast. Nearly four-fifths of Hoghton's brigade were down, and its front had shrunk to the level of that of the French ; but still it remained unbeaten, advanced to within twenty yards of the enemy, and fired unceasingly.

Nor was the trial less severe on the opposing side. Cooped up in a dense column, unable to move, unable, except in the front ranks, to defend themselves, the brave French soldiers surged helplessly from side to side, while their officers sacrificed their lives in vain to steady them. Girard attempted to extend his troops and to make a general deployment from left to right ; but such a manœuvre was too complicated for performance except at leisure, and was not to be executed under the terrible overlapping fire which scourged unceasingly the flanks of the deploying companies back upon their centre. General Pepin of the Fifth Corps fell mortally wounded ; General Maransin and General Brayer of the same corps were carried, apparently dying, to the rear ; Gazan, chief of the staff, was wounded. The Colonel and all the superior officers of the leading regiment were struck down. The dead were piled up in heaps, and the men, bitterly discouraged, cried out not unjustly that they were being slaughtered to no purpose. Yet partly because they were so closely massed together, chiefly because they were soldiers of the Emperor and brave children of France, they stood and were butchered by one half of their number of British.

1811. It was plain that the first general who made a May 16. decisive movement would win the fight. Soult had still in reserve Werlé's brigade, five thousand strong, and also Latour Maubourg's cavalry, of which the greater part had not been engaged, ready for a supreme effort against the British flank ; but he made no attempt to use them. The sight of Cole's division behind Lumley's weak squadrons no doubt daunted him from any employment of his cavalry ; while Lumley's counter-movements to every feint of Latour Maubourg showed that his few squadrons and his horse-artillery were not to be assailed with impunity. But there was no reason why Soult should not have thrown Werlé's brigade into the fight, and it is surprising that he did not do so. In his despatch he alleged that he did not discover until the second phase of the action that Blake had come up, and that he deliberately broke off the battle on finding that the odds against him were far greater than he had thought. This, for reasons that I have already given, may be dismissed as nonsense. The Marshal's manœuvres had been masterly ; and, had he been seconded by his divisional generals with ordinary tactical ability, he would have won a great victory. But Soult was an irresolute commander on the battle-field ; and, when he saw how terribly the Fifth Corps had suffered without gaining an inch of ground, he hesitated to risk the employment of the reserves which would have decided the action in his favour.

He was wrong, far more wrong than he could possibly have known, for his opponent was beginning to lose his head. Dismayed, as well he might be, by the losses of Hoghton's battalions, Beresford sought the brigade of Don Carlos d'Espana and tried to bring it forward, but in vain. He even seized one of the Spanish colonels and dragged him to the front by main force ; but the men would not follow, and the colonel went back as soon as he was released. The General therefore sent a message to Hamilton to hasten one of his Portuguese brigades to the firing line under shelter of

the ridge ; but Hamilton, using his discretionary powers, 1811. had moved his division down close to the stream, in May 16. order to check the advance of Godinot, which had become formidable. Finally, after long and anxious waiting for troops that came not, Beresford perceived to his consternation that Cole's division was marching forward without his orders from its appointed station ; and thereupon, dreading that Latour Maubourg would at once attack and overwhelm Lumley, he rushed away to the rear to make arrangements for retreat.¹ Lighting first upon Collins's Portuguese, he ordered them to march with all haste to the right, and to occupy the ground vacated by Cole. He then sent directions to Dickson to retreat with his battery towards Valverde, and to Alten to withdraw his brigade from Albuera and take post by the conical hill in rear of the village, promising to relieve him with some Spanish battalions. What further steps towards the same end he might have taken, it is impossible to conjecture ; but at this moment, on looking again towards the battle-field, he perceived that the red-coats were rushing forward, and the French flying before them. Thereupon he at once sent a countermand to Alten and galloped with all speed to the fighting line.

The truth was that one of Beresford's staff had taken upon himself to do that for which Beresford in person had lacked courage. While waiting for Hamilton's division to come up, Sir William had despatched Colonel Hardinge, of the Quarter-master-general's department, with a message to Lumley ; and Hardinge, instead of returning, went straight on to Cole and urged him to advance at once upon the left flank of the French column. Cole had already been considering the advisability of such a movement and, after a short

¹ Beresford of course denied this strenuously, but it is absolutely certain that he ordered Dickson to retreat (Duncan, *Hist. of the Royal Artillery*, ii. 296). His whole account of his own proceedings shows that this order and that to Alten were part of a general scheme of retreat (see *Further Strictures*, pp. 167-69).

1811. consultation with Lumley, he decided to take the May 16. responsibility of putting it into execution. He therefore deployed his division into line, with the massed light companies and Kemmis's three companies formed in column upon his right flank, and the first battalion of the Lusitanian Legion, likewise in column, upon the left flank. This was the order in which Colborne had wished to form his brigade when the impetuous Stewart took the command out of his hand ; and it was wisely chosen. The right of the deployed line was made up of Harvey's Portuguese brigade of four battalions, and the left of two battalions of the Seventh and Twenty-third Fusiliers, under Sir William Myers of the Seventh ; the strength of the entire division being about two thousand British and three thousand Portuguese bayonets. Lumley drew up the whole of his cavalry and his battery of horse-artillery upon Cole's right flank and rear ; and the whole marched forward obliquely upon the left flank of the French infantry.

Then at last Soult roused himself to further action ; and, ordering Werlé's division to advance, so as to intervene between the Fusilier brigade and the Fifth Corps, he directed Latour Maubourg to charge the Portuguese. Four regiments of French dragoons accordingly swept down upon the front of Harvey's battalions, which received them with admirable steadiness in line, and blasted them off the field with crushing volleys. So complete was the failure of the charge that the French cavalry made no further attempt at attack, and left Cole's right flank unmenaced. Meanwhile the Fusilier brigade and Lusitanian Legion pressed on to encounter Werlé's brigade, which outnumbered them by two to one.¹ Untaught by the lessons of the day, Werlé had massed his three regiments—each of three battalions—into as many dense columns, with the inevitable result that he could not bring more than an insignificant fraction of his muskets into action. Myers's three regiments each selected its column, and

¹ 5600 against 2600 of all ranks.

at a range of forty paces opened fire. Then for half an 1811. hour followed a second duel of musketry as murderous May 16. as the first had been between the Second Division and the Fifth Corps, but of shorter duration. Once again the French officers strove to deploy ; and once again, before a company could be extended, it was driven back to seek shelter in the thick of the column from the hail of bullets. The Fusiliers also suffered heavily, chiefly from the French artillery, but kept closing towards their centre with an endless fusillade, and advancing nearer and nearer to their enemy. At length Werlé's men broke and fled ; and at the same moment the Fifth Corps, finally shaken by the advance of Abercromby's brigade upon their right flank, dissolved into a mere rabble of flying men. The British pursued, the Fusiliers still firing with terrible effect, while the shattered Second Division, forgetting its losses, leaped forward with the bayonet. "Stop ! stop the Fifty-seventh," shouted Beresford ; "it would be a sin to let them go on" ; but the remainder did not stop. The Fusiliers hunted their quarry to the summit of the height, where Soult's guns were still in battery to cover the flight of his infantry, and, though terribly scourged by a tempest of grape, followed them down to the water's edge. The French foot in one disorderly horde then streamed over the Chicapierna, while Latour Maubourg shielded the retirement of the guns, and Soult's last reserve of infantry, two battalions of Grenadiers, drawn up by the river, presented a front for the protection of the fugitives. After some delay Beresford brought up three Portuguese brigades and drove the Grenadiers back ; but by that time Soult had massed his forty guns on the height between the two streams, and was not easily to be ousted. By the river Alten had long since driven out such few French skirmishers as had entered Albuera, so that the fighting had ceased also in that quarter. Thus after six or seven hours of desperate conflict the battle of Albuera came to an end.

The losses of the British were terrible. In Colborne's

1811. brigade the Buffs lost in killed and wounded over four May 16. hundred and fifty of all ranks, the Forty-eighth one-third of their strength, and the Sixty-sixth a still greater proportion, besides nearly five hundred prisoners. Indeed, but for the fact that several prisoners were able to escape on the same evening, hardly a man of these three battalions would have been left. The Thirty-first, which was longer in action than any other battalion on that day, brought five hundred and eighteen of all ranks into battle, and returned with two hundred and sixty-three. In the victorious brigades of Hoghton and Myers the proportion of killed and wounded to the total strength was appalling. In the Twenty-ninth and Fifty-seventh it amounted, roughly speaking, to seven-tenths ; in the first battalion of the Forty-eighth to four-sevenths ; in the first battalion of the Seventh to exactly one-half ; in the second battalion to five-eighths ; and in the Twenty-third to slightly over one-half. Even Abercromby's brigade, which was supposed to have escaped lightly, left one-fourth of its numbers on the ground.¹ Hoghton's brigade was brought out of action by a captain of the Forty-eighth ; the Twenty-ninth by the junior captain ; and the Forty-eighth and Fifty-seventh by lieutenants. In Myers's brigade the brigadier, who was colonel of the first battalion of the Seventh, was killed ; and the colonels both of the second battalion and of the Twenty-third were wounded.² The Portuguese, except the Lusitanian

¹ It is singular that, in order to give an idea of the experiences of Hoghton's brigade, Mr. Oman quotes the narrative of Moyle Sherer, who belonged, not to 1/48th as he supposes, but to the 34th, one of Abercromby's battalions.

2 LOSSES OF THE ARMY OF BERESFORD AT ALBUERA.

I. BRITISH TROOPS.

Second Division. (W. Stewart.)

Colborne's Brigade.

	Killed.		Wounded.		Missing.		Total.	
	Off.	Men.	Off.	Men.	Off.	Men.		
1/3rd Foot	.	4	212	14	234	2	177	643
2/31st	29	7	119	...	...	155
2/48th	.	4	44	10	86	9	190	343
2/66th	.	3	52	12	104	...	101	272
Total of Brigade	11	337	43	543	11	468	1413	

Legion, suffered very little; while the Spanish dead and 1811. wounded were nearly one-tenth of their total number. Altogether the British and Germans lost, roughly speaking, four thousand men out of ten thousand; the Portuguese four hundred out of ten thousand; and the Spaniards fourteen hundred out of fourteen thousand. The French casualties are more difficult to ascertain. Soult after nearly two months' delay produced a return

Hoghton's Brigade.

29th Foot . . .	5	75	12	233	...	11	336
1/48th . . .	3	64	13	194	...	6	280
1/57th . . .	2	87	21	318	...	...	428
Total . . .	—	—	—	—	...	—	—
	10	226	46	745	...	17	1044

Abercromby's Brigade.

2/28th Foot . . .	...	27	6	131	...	...	164
2/34th . . .	3	30	4	91	...	...	128
2/39th . . .	1	14	4	77	...	2	98
Total . . .	—	—	—	—	...	—	—
	4	71	14	299	...	2	390

Divisional Light Troops.

3 cos. 5/60th . . .	...	2	1	18	...	...	21
Total of 2nd Division . . .	25	636	104	1605	11	487	2868

Fourth Division. (Cole.)

Myers's Brigade.

1/7th Fusiliers . . .	...	65	15	277	...	...	357
2/7th " . .	2	47	13	287	...	...	349
1/23rd R.W. Fusiliers	2	74	11	246	...	6	339
Total . . .	—	—	—	—	...	—	—
	4	186	39	810	...	6	1045

Kemmis's Brigade.

Det. 1 co. each of 2/27th, 1/40th, 97th	1	5	...	14	...	...	20
Total of 4th Division	5	191	39	824	...	6	1065

Alten's Brigade.

1st Light Batt. K.G.L. . .	...	4	4	59	...	2	69
2nd " " "	1	3	1	31	...	1	37
Total . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1	7	5	90	...	3	106

Cavalry. (Lumley.)

De Grey's Brigade.

3rd Dragoon Guards	1	9	...	9	...	1	20
4th Dragoons . . .	...	3	2	18	2	2	27
13th Light Dragoons	...	...	...	1	...	...	1
Total Cavalry . . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1	12	2	28	2	3	48

1811, which showed a total loss of just under six thousand May 16, killed, wounded, and missing out of twenty-four thousand present, the missing amounting to nine hundred; but it can easily be shown that this return is incomplete, if not falsified, and that the casualties of the French were fully eight thousand. On the other hand the French carried off one howitzer of Cleeves's battery, and five colours from the Buffs, Forty-eighth, and Sixty-sixth, the remaining colour of the Buffs being saved by Ensign Walsh who, though severely wounded, tore the silk from the broken staff and thrust it under

Artillery.

British batteries of Lefebvre and Hawker	...	3	1	10	...	1	15
K.G.L. batteries of Cleeves and Sympher	...	...	1	17	1	30	49
Staff	1	...	7	...	...	...	8
Total of British .	33	849	159	2574	14	530	4159

II. PORTUGUESE TROOPS.

Harvey's Brigade .	1	71	9	107	...	15	203
Hamilton's Division .	...	12	1	68	...	...	81
Collins's Brigade .	...	15	4	61	...	11	91
Cavalry (Otway) .	...	...	...	2	...	...	2
Artillery	2	...	8	...	...	...	10
Staff	1	...	1	...	...	...	2
Total	2	100	15	246	...	26	389

III. SPANISH TROOPS.*Blake's Army.*

Lardizabal's Division	4	59	13	215	...	...	291
Ballesteros's Division	3	64	15	193	...	...	275
Zayas's Division .	...	106	26	549	...	...	681
Cavalry	7	2	31	...	...	...	40
Artillery	2	...	7	...	...	...	9
Staff	2	...	9	...	...	...	11
Total of Blake's troops	9	238	65	995	...	...	1307

Castanõs's Army.

Infantry . . . . .	...	4	29	...	...	...	33
Cavalry	11	3	14	...	...	...	28
Artillery . . . . .	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total of troops of Castanõs	11	7	43	...	...	...	61
Grand total of the Spaniards	9	249	72	1038	...	...	1368

his coat. So far, therefore, Soult could for the moment claim the victory.

On the following day Beresford ordered the relics of his force to be under arms two hours before day-break ; and made arrangements which his officers interpreted, no doubt correctly, to mean instant retreat if Soult should renew the attack. Yet he was far better off than Soult, for Kemmis's brigade, fourteen hundred strong, joined him soon after dawn of the 17th ; the cavalry was quite serviceable ; Alten's brigade had suffered very little ; the Portuguese, excepting one battalion, had hardly been touched ; and there were several Spanish battalions which had only been slightly engaged. In the French Army, on the other hand, only Godinot's brigade and the cavalry were fit for action, and even these had suffered appreciably. But Beresford was so badly scared and unnerved that no attempt was made to attack. Soult spent his day in arranging for the transport of his wounded to Seville, and marched before dawn of the 18th, even so leaving several hundreds of maimed soldiers to the mercy of the English. The sufferings of the wounded on both sides are hideous to contemplate. There were so many of them that, even on the British side, numbers lay for two days in the rain before they could be collected, after which it took long to transport them to Valverde. On the 20th the small chapel of Albuera was still full of Frenchmen, many of them victims of amputation, lying on the hard stones without so much as straw beneath them. The dead also were still strewn thickly upon the field, all naked, having been stripped by marauders ; but it was noticed that the Spaniards had clasped the hands of every English corpse. From such a scene Soult's retrograde march allowed a welcome escape. His retreating columns were followed on the 18th by the Allied cavalry as they retired towards Solana, and a small party of French horsemen was cut off and captured. On the same evening Hamilton's Portuguese returned to Badajoz, and at dawn of the 19th reinvested that town.

1811. city on the south bank of the Guadiana. Then at May 19. length the issue of the late battle finally declared itself.

Soult had fought it to raise the siege of Badajoz ; that siege after only three days' interruption was renewed ; the French had failed ; the British had succeeded ; and Albuera was a British victory.

It cannot be said that the commanders-in-chief upon either side distinguished themselves. Soult's excellent dispositions, it is true, were miserably marred by Girard's hasty use of unwieldly columns, while Godinot also was held to have seconded his chief extremely ill. But all this does not excuse Soult's mismanagement of his reserves, nor the very inadequate employment of his overwhelming strength in cavalry. Still more remarkable is the fact that he did not realise the irresolution and blundering of his opponent. Napier, the historian of the Peninsular War, had no love for Beresford ; and his criticisms upon that officer's conduct of the engagement were very severe. But even these pale before the scathing judgment which was passed upon it in his most intimate correspondence by Wellington. "The battle of Albuera was a strange concern. They were never determined to fight it ; they did not occupy the ground as they ought ;¹ they were ready to run away at every moment from the time it commenced till the French retired ; and if it had not been for me, who am now suffering from the loss and disorganisation occasioned by that battle, they would have written a whining report about it which would have driven the people in England mad." "They" in the foregoing extract of course stands for Beresford ; and this trenchant summary of his behaviour is strictly true. Enough has been said of his omission to occupy the hill between the two streams with infantry, so as to compel the enemy to display his force ; whereby the sacrifice of the right bank of the

¹ "All the loss sustained by the British troops was incurred in regaining a height which ought never for a moment to have been in possession of the enemy." Wellington's *Memo. of Operations in 1811.*

Albuera on the 15th might have been avoided, and Soult's 1811. turning movement rendered impossible. But it is worth May 16. while to consider Beresford's proceedings on the 16th more fully. In the first place then, as has been told, he neither expected nor desired a battle ; otherwise his battalions would never have been dismissed after parade, nor his cavalry ordered to forage, nor would a brigadier have been obliged to come on to the field in such haste as to arrive in a civilian's coat. In the second place his dispositions betrayed preoccupation mainly with the idea of retreat. He persistently spoke of the hill behind Albuera as the key of the field, even twenty years after the battle had been fought ;¹ but, though it undoubtedly would have been so if Soult had made a frontal attack, yet it was nothing of the kind in the actual circumstances of the combat. It was, however, the key of any retrograde movement along the road to Valverde ; and Beresford stationed the whole of Hamilton's division to secure it, at the risk of being beaten through sheer weakness of his fighting array. Latour Maubourg's cavalry, again, kept him in mortal terror for his line of retirement, not wholly without reason, for the French squadrons far outnumbered his own ; but it can hardly have been necessary to hold idle not only the British and Villemur's cavalry, fourteen hundred strong,² but also the Fourth Division of nearly five thousand bayonets, to say nothing of Hamilton's six thousand bayonets, in order to paralyse three thousand French horse. This haunting solicitude for the means of running away, this nervous persistence in looking to the rear instead of to the front, vitiated every step which Beresford took during the day. He did not send for Hamilton's division until Stewart's three brigades had been almost overpowered, and, when he was unable to find it, he was at his wits' end. Lastly, when Hardinge took upon himself to bring Cole's division

¹ *First Letter to C. E. Long*, p. 47.

² The 13th L.D., it must be remembered, were by the Albuera river.

1811. into action, Beresford gave up everything for lost ; for, May 16. however he may afterwards have denied it, he certainly issued directions for a retreat.

On the other hand it must be confessed that in two respects he was unlucky ; first, when Blake in his perversity refused to change the front of the whole of his corps and left Zayas's four battalions in isolation ; and, secondly, when Hamilton's messenger, reporting the movement of his division towards Albuera, failed to reach him. Wellington, writing to excuse Beresford, ascribed his losses to the inability of Spanish troops to manœuvre. But such a failing in the Spanish infantry, chiefly raw young troops, was nothing new ; and there arises the question as to the capacity of a commander who posts his right flank in the air, within range of a good artillery position, and allows so dangerous a station to be held by soldiers too ill-trained to be able to change front. As to Hamilton it is sufficient to say that, if he had been brought farther towards the south within reach of the fighting line, instead of being kept in rear to guard the line of retreat, there would have been less difficulty in finding him.

It remains to consider how Wellington expected the position of Albuera to be occupied ; for beyond question its southern end is subject to the disadvantage mentioned by Beresford, that every hummock in the ridge is commanded by another still higher. Charles Stewart, who went over the ground with Wellington himself within a week of the action, wrote to Castlereagh that the highest points on the ridge should have been crowned with guns, and slight earthworks thrown up for their protection, so that under cover of their fire the infantry, always concealed behind the reverse slope, might have been moved to any point.¹ Whether this idea was gathered directly from Wellington's lips there is nothing to show ; but Stewart is not likely to have thought of such a thing himself ; and it may be taken

¹ Londonderry MSS. C. Stewart to Castlereagh, 22nd May 1811.

as certain that Wellington in Beresford's place would have hidden his troops away and given Soult no clue as May 16. to his strength or his weak points. But such subtlety was beyond Sir William, indeed was hardly understood in its fulness by any man except Wellington.

Hence it was that the issue of the battle really turned partly upon the faulty tactics of the French generals, but mainly upon the valour of the British infantry. The fame of the Fusilier brigade is assured by an immortal passage in English literature ; and there are few who have not heard of the "Die-hards" at Albuera. All honour to the Fifty-seventh ; but let not the Twenty-ninth, the Forty-eighth, and the Thirty-first, who stood by them, pass unpraised ; nor let the Twenty-eighth, the Thirty-fourth, and the Thirty-ninth under Abercromby, a worthy son of old Sir Ralph, be forgotten. Such constancy as was displayed by these battalions is rare, and has seldom been matched in the history of war. Charles Stewart, Wellington's Adjutant-general, quite at a loss for words, wrote to Castlereagh of the "inextinguishable, unexampled, and (I may say) incomprehensible valour of the British infantry." The last epithet is a severe one, for it hints that Beresford was not such a commander as would obtain the uttermost exertion and sacrifice from his soldiers ; but in other respects also it demands a little explanation. Whence came the spirit which made that handful of English battalions—for not a single Scots or Irish regiment was present¹—content to die where they stood rather than give way one inch ? Beyond all question it sprang from intense regimental pride and regimental feeling ; and it is to be noticed that among the field-officers there were some, for example Way of the Twenty-ninth, Lestrange of the Thirty-first, Inglis

¹ It is worth while to give the old territorial designations of the regiments at Albuera. Buffs (East Kent), 7th (none), 23rd (Royal Welsh), 28th (North Gloucester), 29th (Worcestershire), 31st (Huntingdon), 34th (Cumberland), 39th (Dorset), 48th (Northampton), 57th (West Middlesex), 66th (Berkshire).

1811. of the Fifty-seventh, and Myers of the Seventh, who May 16. were of exceptional excellence. Until recently the British Army was said, not untruly, to be no army at all but a *congeries* of regiments ; and there can be no doubt that our military organisation was imperfect and incoherent, until the virtual autonomy of every regiment—a relic of the proprietary system—was finally broken down. But there have been occasions when this very exaggeration of regimental independence has wrought miracles ; and Albuera is one of them. The regimental officers can hardly have failed to perceive that Beresford was making a very ill hand of the battle, but that was no affair of theirs. The great point to each of them was that his battalion was about to be tried, and that in the presence of other battalions, by an ordeal which would test its discipline and efficiency to the utmost. Sergeants and really old soldiers, of which latter there was always at least a sprinkling, took precisely the same view. Staff-officers might speak of general actions if they would ; but, except to such inferior mortals, a battle was purely a regimental matter and must be treated as such. And hence it was that when one man in every two, or even two in every three, had fallen in Hoghton's brigade, the survivors were still in line by their colours, closing in towards the tattered silk which represented the ark of their covenant, the one thing supremely important to them in the world. Regimental rivalry strengthened this sentiment ; and therefore, when the French finally turned to flight, the Fifty-seventh, though but two hundred out of six hundred men were still unhurt, dashed forward with the rest of their brigade in pursuit until recalled by the Commander-in-Chief. It was this regimental spirit which saved Beresford ; and, to do him justice, he acknowledged it to the full, for there was not in all the army a braver or more generous officer than he. Though eloquent neither with tongue nor with pen, he wrote in his despatch a sentence which should never be forgotten. “ It is impossible by any description to do

justice to the distinguished gallantry of the troops; but 1811. every individual nobly did his duty; and it is observed that our dead, particularly of the Fifty-seventh regiment, were lying, as they had fought, in ranks, and every wound was in the front."

CHAPTER VII

1811. It was, as already told, on the 17th of May that Wellington received between Sabugal and Castello Branco a nervous letter from Beresford, which prompted him to hurry on to the Guadiana with all possible speed.

May 19. Arriving at Elvas on the 19th there reached him the Marshal's report of the battle of Albuera, written in so despondent a tone that the Commander-in-Chief felt bound to send a little note of comfort to his dispirited subordinate. He was not, however, too well pleased, seeing that Sir William had managed to reduce his two British divisions to the strength of one; and, after

May 21. going over the battle-field on the 21st, he wrote, as we have read, an extremely caustic description of Beresford's proceedings at large. However, he perceived that the enterprise which he had proposed to himself, the siege of Badajos, was still feasible with the troops which were following him from the Agueda; and, before he had been at Elvas twenty-four hours, he ordered up a fresh battery of artillery from Lisbon to supplement the now attenuated body of gunners that remained with Beresford's army. It was one of Wellington's great advantages, to use his own words, that no one of the French armies had any communication with any other nor knew anything of its movements, all alike being dependent upon orders from Paris; whereas he, with the whole population friendly to him, knew all that was passing on every side. D'Erlon, as he was aware, had marched away to join Soult in Andalusia, pursuant to the Emperor's command, so that the Ninth

Corps was for the present out of action. Marmont 1811. had retired to Salamanca, having before him the duty of re-equipping and reorganising his army, a task which would probably prevent him from taking the field for several weeks. Bessières was fully occupied with guerrillas and other troubles in the north; and it was evident from intercepted letters that he was not working kindly with the Army of Portugal. The moment was therefore favourable for taking liberties with the French commanders, and the more so in that Wellington could feel fairly sure that little or no intelligence of his movements would reach them.

Hence he had not hesitated to draw away ten thousand men of his army to the south, to leave the remainder—fewer than thirty thousand of all nations—under the command of Spencer on the Agueda, and even to direct the latter, conditionally, to despatch two more brigades to the Guadiana. We can understand that he would gladly have substituted Graham for Spencer, if the former had been at hand; but that desirable exchange, though not far distant, was as yet unaccomplished. However, Wellington left with Spencer very full instructions as to his movements in case Marmont should advance, pointing out that he must retreat by way of Sabugal to Belmonte and the Zezere, contesting every mile of ground, and that Almeida must be blown up. Accordingly, on the Agueda Spencer remained, with an exceptionally good opportunity of displaying his talent, if he had any; but it will be seen that he only justified Wellington's former criticisms upon him. He was fidgety and nervous even to timidity, and earned no distinction except the unflattering name of a "regular old woman."¹

Before Badajoz could be invested, however, it was necessary that Soult should retire to a becoming distance. The Marshal had begun his retreat, it will be remembered,

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Spencer, 15th, 22nd, 24th May; to Beresford, 19th May; to Howorth, 20th May; to Liverpool, 22nd, 24th May 1811. *Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith*, i. 47.

1811. on the 18th, escorting a huge convoy of wounded by way of Solana and Almendralejo towards Llerena. On the May 23. 23rd the British infantry reached Almendralejo, and on that same day the French rear-guard withdrew from Villafranca upon Usagre, and thence to Llerena. On May 25. the 25th Soult, wishing to know what force was pursuing him, ordered Latour Maubourg to march back along the road with ten regiments of cavalry and a battery of field-artillery, in all some three thousand men, and to drive in the British cavalry upon its supports. After moving north-westward for three or four miles Latour Maubourg struck the Spanish advanced parties at Villa Garcia, and chasing them back to Usagre came there upon General Lumley, who had with him the Third Dragoon Guards, Fourth and Fourteenth Dragoons, and Lefebure's troop of horse-artillery, making together with some weak regiments of Spanish and Portuguese cavalry, a force of about twenty-two hundred men, nearly half of whom were British. The ground about Usagre is favourable for an inferior force, and had been thoroughly studied by Lumley. The town lies between two ranges of hills on the south side of a small brook, which runs in a deep ravine and is crossed by a bridge; the approach to which from the south lies through a narrow street, and from the north through an equally narrow defile. Lumley had carefully noted and sounded the crossing-places above and below this bridge; and, upon the report that the enemy was advancing in some force of all three arms, he sent the Thirteenth Light Dragoons and the Portuguese ahead by these crossing-places, with orders to form line in conjunction with the Spaniards beyond the town. Latour Maubourg thereupon deployed his columns and brought forward his guns, when, having ascertained what they wanted to know, the Allied squadrons fell back slowly, the Spaniards through the middle of the town, the British and Portuguese upon each flank of it. There they took up their stations behind a rising ground to watch the fords;

while Lumley with the Third Dragoon Guards and 1811. Fourth Dragoons remained in reserve behind the sky-line. May 25.

The guns of Latour Maubourg continued to fire from the heights about the town as the Allies retired, but without any result; and they were effectively answered by Lefebure's battery, though the British guns were inferior both in calibre and in numbers. Unable to make any headway in this fashion, Latour Maubourg detached General Briche with three weak regiments of light horse to move to his right down the stream, cross it at a ford which had been used by Otway, and turn Lumley's left flank. Briche marched off accordingly, but finding that Otway was waiting for him above the ford, dared not engage him up a steep hill-side, and proceeded farther down the water in search of another passage, which he was unable to find. Though these wanderings naturally took much time, Briche omitted to send any report of his doings; wherefore Latour Maubourg, after waiting for over an hour, chose to assume that all was well and ordered the leading brigade of dragoons under General Bron to advance across the bridge. Bron accordingly moved at a rapid pace through the town under fire of Lefebure's guns, and deployed his leading regiment—the 4th Dragoons—directly it had passed the bridge, quite unconscious that the British Fourth Dragoons were immediately on his front and the Third Dragoon Guards on his left flank. The Third promptly charging upon one flank and the Fourth upon the other overthrew the French 4th; and apparently at the same time the French 20th, which was coming up in support, was caught before it could deploy.¹ Both regiments were driven back in

¹ This seems to be the meaning of Lumley's observation that the French presented two fronts (*Wellington Desp.*, ed. 1852, v. 60-61), the 4th being formed in line to the front, and the 20th coming up in column, and possibly wheeled into line hastily to a flank. Picard (*La Cavalerie dans les Guerres de la Revolution et de l'Empire*, ii. 315 sq.) says that the 4th and 20th were formed in

1811. utter rout upon the bridge, but found it blocked by the May 25. French 26th which was hurrying over to the rescue ; and the Allies, to use Cromwell's phrase, had the execution of their enemies for some minutes as they vainly sought safety in flight up and down the bank. Latour Maubourg did what he could to save the fugitives by dismounting a regiment and opening fire with carbines, but with little result. The French dragoons at last dropped off their horses and fled to the town on foot ; and, when the pursuit ended, one hundred and seventy of them had been killed and wounded, and eighty officers and men captured,¹ besides a great number of horses ; whereas the casualties of the Allies did not amount to twenty. Altogether it was a pretty little fight, exceedingly well managed by Lumley who, though no genius with pen, ink, and paper, was capable enough in action.

The ravine at Usagre from that day became the boundary between Soult's army and the Allied forces which covered the leaguer of Badajoz, Wellington being unwilling to delay the siege any longer. The British and Portuguese formed the left of the covering troops, their main body of infantry being at Almendralejo and of cavalry at Ribera ; while the bulk of the Spaniards were between Barcarrota and Solana with advanced parties at Bienvenida and Calzadilla. In case of an advance of the enemy from the south the point of concentration was to be, as before, Albuera.² Finally on the 27th Beresford left the forces in the field and retired to Lisbon, nominally for the purpose of restoring order and organisation in the Portuguese military departments, really because Wellington had noticed his nervous

line, the former on the right, the latter on the left. Lapène (pp. 181, 182) says that the 4th alone was deployed and the 20th coming up in support.

¹ These are the figures given by Picard ; Lumley states his prisoners at 78 ; Cannon's *History of the 3rd D.G.* says that 96 N.C.O. and men were captured, besides officers.

² *Wellington Desp.* Memo. of 29th May 1811.

condition, which for the time unfitted him for independent command. Beresford's successor, Rowland Hill, had meanwhile arrived at Lisbon from England, and was on his way to resume command of the southern detachment of the army as in 1810. On the 31st he arrived at Almendralejo, welcomed by all ranks of the forces and not least by the Commander-in-Chief.

Wellington during this time proceeded with his preparations for the siege of Badajoz, for which he retained the Third and Seventh Divisions besides Hamilton's and Collins's Portuguese, the whole numbering some fourteen thousand men. The operations were to be conducted against time. "If we don't succeed in a few days," wrote Wellington to his brother Henry on the 29th, "we shall not succeed at all, as the seventeen or nineteen battalions and some cavalry of the Ninth Corps are on their march to join Soult, and I think will reach him by the second week in June." As on the first occasion, therefore, the siege was undertaken with such artillery as was to be found at Elvas, and the principal efforts were directed against the fort of San Cristobal and the castle. One would have thought that Beresford's failure would have sufficed to deter both the Commander and the engineers from such false measures; but it did not. Time was the great object, and therefore it was argued that there must be no delay in waiting for the British siege-train, and that the attack must be directed against the strongest points because, if they were taken—a very important condition—the place must fall directly. No account, then, was to be taken of the deficiencies of the antiquated guns at Elvas, nor of the fact, already ascertained by experience, that the soil before San Cristobal was too thin and too close to the rock to permit trenches to be thrown up. The indefatigable Major Dickson was again employed to collect siege-artillery, and, in spite of all that had passed a fortnight before, declared himself sanguine of success.¹

¹ The Dickson Manuscripts, p. 394.

1811. The blockade of the fortress had been resumed, as May 25. we have seen, on the 18th of May. On the 25th the Seventh Division invested the place on the north bank May 27. of the Guadiana ; and on the 27th Picton's division, marching from Campo Maior, crossed the river by a ford above the town and joined the besieging force on May 29. the south bank. On the night of the 29th ground was broken by reopening Beresford's trenches for a false May 30. attack upon Pardaleras ; and on the 30th the first parallels were begun at a distance of eight hundred yards from the Castle and four hundred yards from San Cristobal. At the latter point it was found that, though there had been a little soil a fortnight before, there was now none, for Phillipon during his few days of freedom had carted away all that had been thrown up by Beresford. A row of gabions was therefore erected, and every effort was made to bring up earth from the rear ; but at daylight the enemy's fire soon knocked over the gabions and picked off several men. Ultimately Wellington was compelled to purchase wool-packs in Elvas, under shelter of which some progress June 1. was made on the night of the 1st of June with the con- June 3. struction of the batteries. By the morning of the 3rd four batteries, mounting fourteen pieces, had been completed against San Cristobal, and one battery, mounting twenty pieces, against the Castle.

Fire was opened at half-past nine, that against the Castle with little accuracy owing to the windage of the guns, and before nightfall two cannon on the north side and two more on the south had been disabled by June 4. their own discharges. On the following day the bombardment was renewed with an increased force of twenty-one guns on the side of San Cristobal, when five more pieces succumbed to their own faultiness, irrespective of others damaged by the enemy. On the June 5. 5th a new battery of seven heavy guns was brought into action at a range of six hundred and fifty yards against the Castle, and some progress was made both there and on the north side ; indeed at San Cristobal it was

reckoned that another day's battering would produce a sufficient breach. Four more guns, however, were this day rendered unserviceable by their own fire, and it was at last resolved to send for some British iron guns which were expected at Elvas from Lisbon. On the 6th the cannonade of San Cristobal was continued throughout the day, with the result that a practicable breach had been made by nightfall ; and it was resolved to deliver an assault some hours later. Accordingly General Houston organised one hundred and eighty volunteers from the Fifty-first, Eighty-fifth, and 17th Portuguese into a forlorn hope of two companies, which at midnight ran forward from the trenches. They reached the works with little loss and made their way without difficulty into the ditch ; but the French had cleared away the rubbish brought down by the British shot, leaving a sheer ascent of seven feet to the breach, and had blocked the breach itself with overturned carts and *chevaux de frise*. Checked at this point the officers ran round the ditch in the hope of finding some low point where the scarp might be escaladed ; but the ladders which they carried with them proved to be everywhere too short ; and after losing half their number killed and wounded, the stormers retired. They cannot be blamed for the failure. They had striven against the inevitable, if anything, for too long ; and indeed it seems that not only was the assaulting party too weak, but that the entire operation was mismanaged.

On the 7th a new battery was completed against the Castle, and the fire visibly enlarged the breach ; but the hill, on which the building stands, being of clay would not crumble away, but peeled off in perpendicular sections and remained inaccessible. Moreover the French, no matter how hot the British fire, were always careful to remove any accumulation of rubbish that might facilitate the ascent. By this time Wellington was beginning to despair of success. D'Erlon's Corps was reported to be due at Cordova on the 6th ; while Marmont, as will presently be explained in detail, had

1811. moved southward from the Tormes on the 3rd.¹ Unless, therefore, the place could be captured by the 10th the siege must be raised. A heavy fire was June 8. maintained on the 8th and 9th ; but the Castle was still pronounced unassailable, though San Cristobal had been nearly silenced and much damaged. Two breaches had now been made, and it was decided to deliver a second June 9. assault at nine o'clock on the evening of the 9th, so as to allow the less time for their repair and for displacing the fallen ruins at their foot. Houston accordingly formed a fresh storming party, four hundred and fifty strong, from the Fifty-first, Eighty-fifth, Chasseurs Britanniques, Brunswick-Oels, and 17th Portuguese, half of them being told off for the actual assault and the remainder detached to make diversions at various points and to keep up a fire of musketry against the parapet. Sixteen ladders of sufficient length were provided ; and the forlorn hope was led, as in the previous storm, by Lieutenant Dyas of the Fifty-first.

At the appointed time the column rushed forward, and its commander, Major M'Geechy, and the guiding engineer were both of them killed before the ditch was reached. The rest jumped down into the ditch and made for the breaches, but, finding them still high overhead, planted their ladders. Every man who attempted to ascend was shot down or bayoneted as soon as he reached the top, while the garrison overwhelmed the main column at the foot of the breach with hand grenades, bags of powder, and every description of missile. At last, after an hour's vain struggle to accomplish an impossible task, the column fell back with a loss one hundred and thirty-nine killed and wounded—seven-tenths of the number that had taken part in the assault. “In fact,” wrote Wellington after this failure, “we have not made a practicable breach either in San Cristobal or in the body of the place” :² in other words,

¹ Wellington Desp. To Liverpool, 6th June ; to Spencer, 7th June 1811.

² Ibid. To C. Stuart, 10th June 1811.

such attacks as those of the 6th and 9th signified simple 1811. sacrifices of brave men and should never have been delivered at all.

On the morning of the 10th the fire against the June 10. Castle was resumed with great effect, for the iron guns had by this time arrived from Lisbon. In fact the breach was made actually practicable ; but none the less Wellington at noon gave orders to raise the siege. In the course of the morning an intercepted letter from Soult to Marmont had been brought in, which pointed clearly to a junction between the armies of Andalusia and of Portugal within a very few days in Estremadura, and stated that in any case Soult himself would march northward about the 9th or 10th. Simultaneously came intelligence from the north which left no doubt but that Marmont was moving southward and might arrive at Merida on the 15th. It was still possible for Wellington to continue the cannonade for a day or two ; but the only result would have been to deplete the ammunition of Elvas to a dangerous extent for no possible profit. Breaches from four to six hundred yards from the nearest trench might suffice for the storm of an Indian stronghold, but not for that of a modern fortress defended by good regular troops under the command of officers distinguished equally for courage and resource. Moreover the prolongation of the siege, while a hostile army was approaching within perilous proximity, might compel the hazard of a general action upon disadvantageous terms. There was therefore nothing to be done but to abandon the entire enterprise.

This was particularly galling to Wellington, for he had lost four hundred and eighty-five of all ranks, killed, wounded, or prisoners, in the course of the siege, and he also knew that Badajoz contained food for less than another fortnight at longest. Indeed Phillipon had actually put the garrison upon half-rations ; and, since he could not hope even so to hold out for more than ten days, he had laid plans for the desperate venture of cutting his way through the beleaguering lines to

1811. Merida. Nevertheless the operations were creditable
June 10. neither to the British Commander nor to his engineers.

It is true that the lack of trained sappers and the defects of the Portuguese guns were matters for which they could not be held responsible ; nor, I think, can Wellington be blamed that his own siege-train was not upon the spot. He had in those very days ordered it to be sent to Oporto and thence up the Douro ;¹ but, believing, as he did, throughout the first four months of 1810, that he might be directed to embark the army at any moment, it is not surprising that he declined earlier to encumber himself with a mass of heavy guns. At the same time, it is unquestionable that every rule for the siege of a fortress was violated by the British, and especially in selection of the wrong points for attack. The engineers blamed Beresford greatly for neglecting their advice during his first short siege, but that same advice was accepted by Wellington with most unsatisfactory consequences ; and indeed the General is said to have exclaimed that in any future operation of the kind he would be his own engineer. At Burgos, as we shall see in due time, he fulfilled this threat and tried East Indian methods with disastrous results ; so that it may be questioned whether his intervention at Badajoz would have been a change for the better. Upon the whole, it seems likely that the engineers stuck to their faulty plans chiefly out of pique, because Beresford had not, as they thought, given them a fair trial ; and that Wellington accepted them from sheer inexperience of this particular branch of the art military. It may be said indeed that the French were as superior to the British in the science of poliorcetics, as were the British to the French in the organisation of transport and supply ; and for precisely the same reasons.²

¹ Wrottesley, *Life of Burgoyne*, i. 133. Napier (iv. 193), ignoring the fact that the siege-train had lain on board ship at Lisbon for at least two years, thinks Wellington open to censure for not asking that it might be sent from England. His ignorance upon such a point is very remarkable.

² Wrottesley, i. 130, 135.

To turn now to the movements of the enemy, it will 1811. be remembered that Marmont had led the Army of May. Portugal back to Salamanca on the 13th of May. The previous narrative has sufficed to show the condition in which he took it over from Massena, and the drastic measures which were necessary to restore it to discipline and efficiency. Napoleon himself had not been blind to its shortcomings, and, as a first step towards ending the insubordination of officers, had authorised the Marshal to substitute organisation in divisions for the previous organisation into army corps, and to send home any general officers who did not command themselves to him. Marmont took advantage of this permission at once. He announced that any general who wished might go home ; and the offer was promptly accepted by Junot, Loison, Marchand, Mermet, and other of the divisional leaders. He then distributed his force into six divisions and promoted brigadiers to command them, keeping only Reynier among the older officers, in case he should be obliged to divide his force. This done, he completed his battalions to a uniform strength of seven hundred men, and sent home the empty cadres which he had depleted in the process. Then turning to the cavalry and artillery he drafted out the horses unfit for immediate service, and found that Montbrun's division of six regiments could produce only eight hundred animals, Lamotte's light brigade only two hundred and fifty, and the artillery a bare four hundred. Within a fortnight he contrived to obtain horses sufficient for twenty-five hundred cavalry and for thirty-six guns, but no more ; and he was compelled to order a vast number of dismounted men to march into France. In fine, the effective strength of the Army of Portugal at the end of May was reduced to twenty-eight thousand soldiers, several thousand more being scattered about in various dépôts and hospitals, from which it was extremely unlikely that the local commanders, who were always in want of troops to repress the guerillas, would ever permit them to rejoin their regiments.

1811. With so small a force Marmont recognised that May. offensive movements were impossible for him except in combination with the army either of the North or of Andalusia ; and, the Emperor having given him no instructions except to work for the general interest of the French forces in the Peninsula, he conceived from the first that his right station, in order to fulfil that end, would be on the Tagus. It so happened that Soult, before starting for the relief of Badajoz, had written to Massena to say that, if he failed in this object with his own army, he might be compelled to ask help from the Army of Portugal. This letter was delivered to Marmont, who responded cordially that, if necessary, he was prepared to bring his entire corps to his colleague's assistance. But before Marmont could march he required money, transport, and the assurance that Bessières would look to the safety of Salamanca in his absence. The Duke of Istria, however, did not receive his appeals in a friendly spirit. He declared, probably with truth, that he had no money to give, and, certainly with untruth, that he could not spare a man for Salamanca. But though niggardly of troops and treasure he was very liberal with advice, urging many reasons to dissuade Marmont from moving to the assistance of Soult. He alleged his colleague's want of transport, cavalry and artillery-teams, the difficulty of supplies, the sufficiency of Soult's army unaided, every plea in fact that could possibly be advanced for the retention of the Army of Portugal in the north. All was to no purpose. Marmont, unlike the majority of Napoleon's Marshals, was a gentleman by birth and by instinct, and was not to be deterred from doing his duty loyally towards his master.¹

June 1. By the 1st of June the Marshal's preparations were completed ; and on that day and the next Reynier moved southward with five divisions of infantry and a thousand horse towards the pass of Baños, while Marmont himself with another division and the whole

¹ *Mémoires de Marmont*, iv. 39-41, 155-170.

of his light cavalry advanced to Ciudad Rodrigo, and 1811. on the 5th threw into it a convoy of provisions. So June 5. confidently was this demonstration made that Spencer, with a far superior force of infantry, did not attempt to check him ; and on the 6th, when Marmont marched June 6. away from Ciudad Rodrigo in two columns upon Espeja and Gallegos, the British Commander drew back the Light Division first to Nave de Haver and later to Alfaiates, covering the movement with the Royal Dragoons and one squadron of the Fourteenth. Slade, who was in command of the cavalry, contrived as usual to blunder in his dispositions, and would have had his rear-guard cut off at the marsh of Nave de Haver, had not a part of the Royals and Fourteenth extricated it by a well-timed charge. It is more than probable that Spencer would have continued his retreat to the Zezere if he had been left to himself ; but fortunately Colonel Pakenham and Colonel Waters pointed out that the enemy's movements were more ostentatious than threatening, and that probably they were only intended to screen the march of the main body to the Tagus. Spencer accordingly halted his forces for the night at Alfaiates and Souto, but he reported next day, June 7. incorrectly, that twenty-one thousand French with thirty-four guns had advanced from Salamanca on the road to Ciudad Rodrigo. Soon afterwards, however, he obtained certain intelligence that a very large column of the enemy was in the pass of Baños ; and presently Marmont himself wheeled off to the pass of Perales and was seen no more. It was therefore manifestly Spencer's duty to move southward parallel with Marmont, and to join Wellington in Alemtejo.¹

It cannot be said that Spencer distinguished himself at this crisis. His hurried and precipitate retreat before a force of less than half his numbers was very nearly disgraceful ; and even more discreditable was the unseemly haste with which he ordered Pack to blow up what remained of the fortifications of Almeida and

¹ *Wellington Desp.* (ed. 1852), v. 92. Napier iv. 196-197.

1811. destroy such stores as were in it. Wellington had only June. advised this measure in case the abandonment of Almeida should be absolutely necessary ; and it was very evident that the place had been sacrificed under the influence of panic when it was in no danger whatever. The Commander-in-Chief was extremely annoyed, and, when writing to Spencer on the subject, was at no pains to conceal his sentiments.¹ It had never occurred to Sir Brent, who was not a great genius, that the fortress could be useful as a dépôt for the battering-train when the time should come to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo ; probably indeed he believed that the British were more likely to evacuate the Peninsula than to recover the strongholds upon the Spanish frontier.

Meanwhile the march of the Allies southward was continued over the Coa to Penamacor, thence by Castello Branco to Villa Velha, where the Tagus was crossed on the bridge of boats, and on to Niza and Portalegre, Anson's cavalry covering the van and Slade's the rear. The heat was so intense that it was necessary to move chiefly by night, and even so hundreds of stragglers were left exhausted by the roadside. But none the less

June 13. by the 13th Anson and the Light Division were at Niza ; the First Division at Villa Velha ; the Sixth Division at Castello Branco ; and Slade's cavalry about Salvaterra, watching the road which enters Portugal by Zarza la Mayor. On that day Wellington summoned the head of the column to Portalegre, to which place the troops moved down in succession ; Slade's brigade, the last of all, reaching it on the 20th. Meanwhile he had kept his own troops around Badajoz while the siege-train was being transported back to Elvas, maintaining the blockade till the last moment in case some fortunate accident should delay the coming of the relieving force.

June 14. On the night of the 14th arrived intelligence that Marmont's foremost troops had reached Truxillo ; and on the same day Soult's cavalry was reported to be at Santa Marta. Accordingly on the 17th Wellington

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Spencer, 11th June 1811.

passed the whole of his force over the Guadiana by 1811. fords, while Blake, pursuant to an arrangement already concluded, crossed the river likewise at Juromenha bound for the Condado de Niebla, Wellington having undertaken to feed his army during the march through Portugal. Thus all the British troops were concentrating timely in the valley of the Caia to meet the enemy in front; while Blake was stealing round to threaten Seville in their rear.

On the French side Marmont's march had from the nature of the case been longer and more severe than that of Spencer; and consequently his advanced guard, moving by Bejar and Plasencia, did not reach Almaraz until the 11th. Considerable delay in the passage of June 11. the Tagus was caused by the failure of the commandant at Madrid to send pontoons and provisions, as Marmont had requested him. However, the army eventually crossed the river by a flying bridge, and proceeding by Truxillo and Miajadas reached Merida on the 18th. June 18. Soult in the meantime had on the 13th been joined June 13. at Usagre by d'Erlon's corps which, moving from Valladolid by Madrid and Toledo, had consumed a full month on their march to reach him. D'Erlon's troops, which consisted of fourth battalions and extra squadrons, were drafted as far as possible into the regiments to which they belonged; though some five thousand men, belonging to regiments of Victor's corps, were still organised as a provisional division. Thus the gaps made by the slaughter at Albuera were filled up, and Soult's army was raised to about twenty-eight thousand effective men, too weak a force to engage Wellington unaided. Breaking up, therefore, from Llerena on the 12th the Duke of Dalmatia marched north-westward by Los Santos, Villafranca, and Almendralejo, which last place he reached on the 16th; on the 17th his advanced June 16. cavalry came in touch with that of Marmont at Merida; and on the 18th the junction of the two armies was June 18. finally accomplished.

The meeting between the two Marshals was most

1811. cordial, Soult being delighted to find at last a colleague June 18. who would work for the common good instead of playing only for his own hand, and Marmont equally enchanted with the consciousness of his own virtue.¹ With nearly sixty thousand men between them they hastened to advance against Wellington, whom their latest information represented to be still at Albuera ; and it was not June 19. until the evening of the 19th that they discovered that he had recrossed the Guadiana and was gone. On the June 20. 20th, the very day on which Phillipon's provisions came to an end, they entered Badajoz ; and, after ascertaining June 21. on the morrow that Olivenza had been evacuated by the Allies, they decided to cross the Guadiana and either to bring their enemy to action or, if he should have retired before them, to lay siege to Elvas.

"Matters are in a very critical state just now," wrote Wellington to his brother Henry on the 21st, "but I think I shall carry them through." Against the sixty thousand men of his adversaries the British Commander could match some fifty-four thousand of his own, thirty-seven thousand of them British ; and though these were not all of them on the spot—for he had kept the Fifth Division and a brigade of Portuguese cavalry in Lower Beira until the last of Marmont's troops should have passed the Tagus—yet with this exception all were between Arronches and Elvas. Wellington had no wish to risk an action unless in order to provision Elvas ; but, in case one should be forced upon him, he had chosen a position upon a ridge of heights between the rivers Caia and Gebora, facing south-east. His left was to rest on the latter river by the little fortified town of Oguella, in rear of which a forest six miles in extent practically prohibited any turning movement except by a very long circuit through Alburquerque and Castello de Vide. From thence the line ran for between four and five miles to Campo Maior, the fortifications of which had been repaired and furnished with heavy guns, while the

¹ "Certes, il y avait de la générosité à moi." *Mémoires du Duc de Raguse*, iv. 43, and see also p. 45. .

weak points in the intermediate ground had been 1811. entrenched ; and lastly from Campo Maior as a June 21. centre the right was prolonged to the bridge of the Caia. But though this was apparently the ground on which Wellington would have preferred to receive attack,¹ it was in the enemy's power to turn it by the right in an open space of about ten miles between Campo Maior and Elvas, so that the British Commander was prepared to defend this space also. Here the ground was considerably stronger than on the left ; while Elvas, perched high upon its granite peak, made the right flank unassailable. Wellington therefore, while occupying his left in some strength, showed no troops upon his right. Oguella was garrisoned by two companies of Portuguese ; between it and Campo Maior lay the Third and Seventh Divisions under Picton ; and between Campo Maior and the Caia were the Second and Fourth Divisions and Hamilton's Portuguese under Hill, their camp being hidden away in the woods opposite Torre de Mouro. The Light Division was at Reguengo, nearly seven miles northwest of Campo Maior, ready to support either Picton or Hill. The First, Sixth, and Fifth Divisions² were echeloned along the road which leads from Arronches to Elvas ; the Guards' brigade being the foremost at Santa Eulalia,³ from whence a good cross-road leads by

¹ I deduce this from Wellington's dispositions and from the fact that Burgoyne (Wrottesley's *Life of Sir J. Burgoyne*, i. 134) mentions no position except that between the Caia and Gebora.

² The Fifth Division did not arrive at Arronches till the 24th. Napier states that the First Division was held in reserve at Portalegre to parry any turning movement by Alburquerque ; but Mr. Oman (iv. 450) shows that this is incorrect. It is evident that Wellington had no idea of keeping a division so far off as to be unable to take part in a general action, as Napier suggests.

³ Stothert calls the place Santa Olaya, a mistake for Santa Olalla which would be the Spanish form of Eulalia. Mr. Oman is mistaken in describing it as near Elvas, for it is all but nine miles from it as the crow flies. I presume that the remaining brigades were in rear of the Guards, though according to the *Journal of an Officer of the King's German Legion*, p. 251, Low's brigade of the K.G.L. was there also.

1811. the ford at Torre de Mouro to Campo Maior. Midway between Santa Eulalia and Elvas, at Quinta de São João, were Wellington's head-quarters, at a point where five different roads met from north, south, and east ; so that he was not only at hand to dispose the First, Fifth, and Sixth Divisions between the Caia and Elvas, but could gallop away with ease to any quarter of the position. Of the cavalry, Long's brigade of the Eleventh Dragoons (which had recently arrived from England), and the 1st and 2nd Hussars of the Legion,¹ were extended to the right, and Madden's Portuguese cavalry on the left, with De Grey's, Slade's, and Anson's brigades in reserve, the first about Campo Maior, the two last about Arronches. There was a good road along the reverse side of the position from end to end ; and the old Moorish watch-towers, which crown every summit on this part of the Portuguese frontier, made admirable signal-stations to pass intelligence from flank to flank. Finally, although Wellington could see clearly every movement of the enemy, the great mass of his troops was hidden away and was invisible from any point that could be reached by Soult.

June 23. On the 23rd² Soult and Marmont made a reconnaissance in force on the north bank of the Guadiana, Godinot's division advancing at the same time from Olivenza to the south bank over against Juromenha. On the British right and centre Bron with one brigade and Latour Maubourg with fourteen squadrons of

¹ Two weak squadrons only of the 2nd Hussars.

² There is a curious discordance among the authorities as to the date of this reconnaissance. Wellington, Soult, and Tomkinson state it as the 23rd ; Stolzenberg (Schwertfeger, ii. 245), who was seriously engaged in the course of it, and Leach state it as the 22nd ; and Napier as the 21st. Mr. Oman has followed Stolzenberg ; but the agreement of the two Commanders-in-Chief would seem to be sufficient warrant to fix the date as the 23rd. Still I am bound to add that, though Wellington's despatch in the printed collection gives the day as the 23rd, the *Gazette* gives it as the 22nd.

horse forded the river, the former some way below 1811. Elvas, the latter nearly opposite to it ; while on the left June 23. Montbrun with two brigades crossed by the bridge of Badajoz and pushed forward towards Campo Maior. Bron, of course, encountered no troops ; and Montbrun, after driving in the Allied cavalry, was brought to a stand by the sight of the British infantry, which he estimated correctly at two divisions. Latour Maubourg encountered by chance the 2nd German Hussars and the Eleventh British Dragoons which, partly through inexperience (for both were new to the Peninsula) and partly through the faulty dispositions of Long, had thrown out picquets of unnecessarily large numbers. The result was that the Hussars resisted too long at the fords, had to fight hard to secure their retreat, and only escaped at the last with the loss of some twenty-five of all ranks, and eleven horses killed, wounded, and taken. Turning to his right, Latour Maubourg came upon the rear of a squadron of the Eleventh, which he threatened to cut off from Elvas. Captain Lutyens, who was in command, mistaking the French for the Portuguese, did not perceive his danger till too late, and, though he charged through the first French line, was overwhelmed by the second. Thus the entire squadron, with the exception of one officer, fell, alive or dead, into the enemy's hands ; and ninety men of Long's brigade were sacrificed to the ignorance of their officers.¹ Wellington, much annoyed, read Long a little lecture which cannot have been agreeable to him, and, in reporting the circumstance to Liverpool, was careful to point out the difference between regiments trained and untrained by active service. "The old regiments of cavalry," he said, "throughout all their service and all their losses put together have not lost so many men as the 2nd Hussars and Eleventh Dragoons, and the Thirteenth Light Dragoons, the former in a few days,

¹ Soult, in his report to Berthier (*Wellington Desp.* ed. 1852, v. 778-779), of course states the number of prisoners at 163, besides killed and wounded.

1811. the latter in a few months. However, we must make June 23. the new as good as the old."¹

The reconnaissance of the 23rd proved to the French Marshals that Wellington was in force upon the Caia and intended to stay there; but they were little the wiser as to his position or his numbers, for they imagined that the Spanish troops were still with him, and reckoned his force at sixty thousand men. Both of them in their despatches lamented the fact that he declined a general action, which would mean a decisive victory for the French; whereas Wellington at the moment was bewailing the necessity for risking a battle at a time when it was undesirable for him to fight.² Marmont and Soult knew well enough in their hearts that they could force on an engagement without difficulty if they wished it; and it must be admitted that they had every reason to wish it, for, in order to concentrate sixty thousand men at Badajoz, they had been compelled to denude Leon and Andalusia of all troops except garrisons, and to leave those garrisons at the mercy of the Spanish armies of Murcia and Galicia and of the far more formidable guerilla-bands. Nevertheless the recollection of their recent defeats was so fresh that they shrank from the trial; and, instead of combating the common enemy, they took to

June 24. quarrelling among themselves. On the 24th Soult informed Marmont that his letters from Andalusia represented Seville to be in great danger from the insurgent levies of Ronda, and that he must return thither at once with his army, leaving his colleague to watch over the safety of Badajoz. Soult's fears, it

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 27th June 1811. Meanwhile Wellington treasured up the incident in his memory as an argument against imitation of the French uniform in any particular. "Lutgens and his picquet," he wrote five months later, "were taken because the 3rd hussars [he meant the 3rd Portuguese] had the same caps as the French *chasseurs à cheval*." *Wellington Desp.* To Torrens, 6th Nov. 1811.

² Marmont and Soult to Berthier, 21st and 22nd June 1811. Belmas, i. 569-579. *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 25th June 1811.

must be explained, were not inspired by any action of 1811. Blake's, though he had just heard a report of that June 24. officer's march to the Condado de Niebla, but by a general revival of insurrectionary activity consequent upon the weakening of the Andalusian garrisons. Marmont, a stranger to Spain and highly contemptuous of partisan warfare, considered his anxiety to be ridiculous ; and, being forewarned by Junot of the selfishness of Soult, he could only see in the proposal an insidious design to sacrifice alike himself, the Army of Portugal, and Badajoz. He therefore declined to entertain it unless the Fifth Corps and the whole of Latour Maubourg's cavalry division—some fifteen thousand men—were left with him ; threatening that, if Soult should draw off the whole of his troops, he would at once repass the Tagus with the Army of Portugal. This compromise Soult was compelled to accept ; and thus in less than a week after their exchange of compliments upon the junction of their armies, the two commanders had determined to part company upon terms of mutual suspicion.¹

However, for the present the entire French army remained in its old position, making reconnaissances which kept Wellington very much on the alert, though occupied principally, as he said, by the business of procuring subsistence. On the 27th information came June 27. in that Godinot had blown up the fortifications at Olivenza and marched to Valverde, and two days later it was ascertained that he had taken the main road to Seville. Soult, as a matter of fact, had on the 28th June 28. started for Seville with the divisions both of Godinot and of Conroux, and with three regiments of cavalry ; but it was a fortnight before Wellington ascertained positively, through an intercepted letter from Marmont to Berthier,² that more than one division had accompanied him. Yet the departure of even one division showed that the period of peril was past ; though, so

¹ *Mémoires du Duc de Raguse*, iv. 47-48.

² *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 11th July 1811.

1811. long as Marmont remained in the vicinity, Wellington was bound to remain likewise, in order to ensure the safety of Elvas ; and Marmont, for his part, could not move until he had revictualled Badajoz. Until the July 15. 15th of July, therefore, the two hostile armies watched each other from opposite sides of the Guadiana, the French during the interval gathering together six months' provisions for the fortress. Then d'Erlon, who was now in command of the Fifth Corps, withdrew his troops to Zafra, Los Santos, and Merida ; while Marmont, leaving one division and his light cavalry at Truxillo, fell back from the exhausted region of Northern Estremadura to the valley of the Tagus and the Vera de Plasencia. With one division in the province of Avila, another at Plasencia, head-quarters at Naval Moral, and strong bridge-heads at Almaraz and on the Tietar, he judged himself well situated to concentrate for action either in Estremadura or Old Castile.

Wellington did not long outstay him. There was no object in clinging to the unhealthy valleys of the Caia and the Guadiana since all chance of recovering July 18. Badajoz had vanished. Accordingly on the 18th he issued orders for the troops to go into cantonments, from Castello Branco in the north to Estremoz in the July 24. south, head-quarters being transferred on the 24th from Quinta de São João to Portalegre. Hamilton's Portuguese, the Second Division with Long's and De Grey's brigades of cavalry, and the brigades of Portuguese horse of Otway and Barbaçena alone remained in the vicinity of Elvas at Villa Viçosa and other villages farther to the north, under the very competent command of General Hill. Thus the immediate outcome of the elaborate movements of both French and English to the Guadiana was a deadlock. But it was not for nothing that Wellington had drawn the bulk of the French field-armies to that point ; and we must now see what had been going forward in other parts of the Peninsula.

When Wellington led first a part and latterly the whole of his army southward to the Guadiana he neces-

sarily engaged the attention of the French Army of 1811. Portugal and of the South with his own troops. But there was yet another French force, the Army of the North under Bessières, for which he was obliged also to find employment lest it should penetrate into Portugal on his left flank and rear, and, with the aid of Soult and Marmont, perhaps force him back to Lisbon. From the very first, ever since the deputies of Asturias had appealed to England for help, the British Ministers had specially interested themselves in the northern provinces of Spain ; and in September 1810 they had established a special agent, General Walker, at Coruña to distribute arms, give advice to the generals and insurrectionary leaders, and furnish intelligence to London. The Army of Galicia, as we have seen, had never been very efficient or well organised ; and it was in far from good condition when Walker arrived. Asturias, on the other hand, had always shown spirit and activity under such leaders as Porlier ; and towards the end of April 1811, Liverpool, upon Walker's suggestion, submitted to Wellington a proposal for seizing and fortifying the port of Santoña in Biscay, as a haven from which the British ships of war could cut off all marine communication between France and Asturias, and as a dépôt from which the insurrection in the north might be nourished and directed. The British Government was perhaps the more inclined to favour the project owing to correct information that Napoleon had ordered Santoña to be fortified for his own purposes ; but Wellington deprecated the employment of British troops in any such enterprise. He had already matured a scheme for a Spanish diversion in the north, and, though he was prepared to allow the occupation of Santoña to form a part of it, he could find work enough for the British soldiers in the Peninsula without locking them up in a fort on the Atlantic.¹

¹ *Wellington Desp.* Liverpool to Wellington, 28th April ; Wellington to Liverpool, 26th May 1811. *Corres. de Napoléon*, 17,436, 17,439.

1811. The force of Bessières in the north amounted to four divisions, namely, that of Bonnet, hitherto always employed in Asturias ; that of Serras which, with head-quarters at Benavente, watched the frontier of Galicia ; and those of the Young Guard under Generals Roguet and Dumoustier, which were cantoned in the provinces of Palencia, Valladolid, and Burgos. In addition, there were two brigades of cavalry and some odd battalions, bringing the total of the whole up to sixty thousand men ; but it was quite evident that these were none too many to keep in subjection an area of some forty thousand square miles, much of it very difficult country and haunted by some of the ablest of the guerilla-leaders. It was only with the greatest reluctance that Bessières consented to take over temporarily from Marmont the protection of the north of Leon ; and his first step, after the march of the Army of Portugal southward, was to order Bonnet to evacuate Asturias and march his entire division to Leon. Napoleon on hearing of this step condemned it with more than his usual vigour ; but, as shall now be seen, when Bonnet reached Leon on the 17th of June, he came none too soon for the safety of Bessières,

Pursuant to Wellington's directions General Santocildes on the 12th of June brought forward nearly eight thousand men of the Army of Galicia to Astorga ; while simultaneously General Cabrera led another division of twenty-five hundred men from Puebla de Senabria upon La Bañeza. A third division of Asturians should have acted with them ; but half of it was detained to occupy Oviedo, and only one brigade under General Castañon was sent round by a circuitous route to join Santocildes. On reaching Astorga on the 19th of June the latter officer found that the weak French garrison had retired to Leon after blowing up part of the works ; but presently Serras advanced from Benavente to meet him, while Bonnet detached two battalions under General Valletaux to second Serras. That general was brought to a

standstill by Cabrera near La Bañeza ; and Valletaux, 1811. rashly attacking the bulk of the troops of Santocildes June 23. at Benavides, was assailed on his right flank by Castañon—who arrived opportunely upon the field from Asturias—and was repulsed with a loss of over three hundred men. Valletaux himself was killed ; his beaten troops fell back upon Leon, and Serras retired upon Benavente ; whereupon Santocildes uniting his entire force moved forward on the 2nd of July July 2. against Bonnet. There was a sharp engagement between the two on the 15th ; but by the 17th the divisions July 17. of Serras and Dumoustier had come up, with Bessières himself at their head ; and Santocildes with good sense and prudence retired westward into the mountains. Bessières was unable to follow, for, before he could attempt pursuit, he received the alarming news that his head-quarters at Valladolid had been attacked on the 15th by the guerilla-bands of Mina and Longa. Hastily July 15. returning to Valladolid with Dumoustier's divisions, the Marshal there found letters signifying that the Emperor had recalled him from his command. Bessières in consequence vanishes at this point from the Peninsula, his successor being General Dorsenne.

Meanwhile Bonnet and Serras had stationed themselves on the east bank of the Orvigo ; but were presently compelled by Santocildes, who advanced against them with his whole force, to retire to Leon. The guerillas immediately flooded the whole of the province, isolating all outlying garrisons, even that of Salamanca ; while their comrades farther to the east gave terrible trouble to General Roguet's division on the lines of communication. But now two misfortunes stemmed the tide of Spanish success. Dorsenne was reinforced by a new division under General Souham, and Santocildes was superseded by General Abadia, a leader upon whom Wellington had founded great hopes, which were too soon to be disappointed. Turning over the care of the province of Burgos to Souham, Dorsenne marched on the 9th of August from Valladolid with two Aug. 9.

1811. divisions of the Young Guard and both of his brigades Aug. of cavalry upon La Bañeza, while Bonnet simultaneously

moved forward from Leon upon Astorga. Upon the advice of Santocildes Abadia retreated westward; but Dorsenne, following him up, beat him after severe fighting at the passes above Astorga, and forced him still farther back. Thereupon Abadia decided to retire southward to Orense; and Dorsenne, unable to pursue through so barren a country, turned about

Aug. 29. from Villafranca on the 29th of August for Astorga, burning villages in all directions as he went. He had good reasons for so doing, as the guerilla-bands had been unusually busy during his absence.

Aug. 14. Porlier on the 14th had stormed Santander and captured three hundred prisoners; other bands were daily worrying all the French garrisons; Julian Sanchez had foiled every effort to revictual Ciudad Rodrigo; and lastly Wellington, as we shall see, had reappeared in his old quarters on the Agueda. The British Commander, thanks to the skill of Santocildes and the boundless activity of such men as Mina, Longa, Porlier and Sanchez, had been able to march to the Guadiana and back with perfect safety to himself and to Portugal; and upon his return the northern provinces became once more the field chiefly of minor operations.

Let us now look to the second diversion whereby Wellington had broken up the combination between Soult and Marmont. Blake, after crossing the

June 17. Guadiana at Juromenha on the 17th of June, had turned south through Alemtejo, recrossed the river

June 22-23. about thirty miles from its mouth at Mértola six days

June 30. later, and on the 30th was at Niebla. He was now within forty miles of Seville, which was so weakly garrisoned that it could hardly have resisted him; but he preferred to besiege one of Napoleon's nondescript foreign battalions in the castle of Niebla. Having outmarched his guns, he could do no more than invest this stronghold until the 2nd of July, when he learnt that Soult had detached the divisions of Godinot and

Conroux against him. Thereupon he embarked Zayas's division at Ayamonte on the 8th and returned to July 8. Cadiz, whither Ballesteros, after evading the French for some weeks in the mountains, followed him at the end of August. It cannot be said that Blake distinguished himself in this enterprise, but at least he succeeded in keeping Soult distracted for a short time.

Elsewhere in the south the Spanish Army of Murcia had remained quiet since its disastrous defeat at Baza in November 1810, until Soult withdrew, for the campaign of Albuera, a portion of the troops opposed to it. Then in May General Freire began slowly to advance from Murcia eastward; and Leval, who had succeeded Sebastiani in command of the Fourth Corps, was too weak to stand before him. In the middle of July Blake obtained leave to carry to Murcia the two divisions which he had brought back from Albuera, and landed with them at Almeria on the July 31. 31st. On the 3rd of August they joined Freire at Baza; but he, though now in command of seventeen Aug. 3. thousand men, would make no attempt upon the weak French garrison of Granada, and remained halted in a strong position about forty miles to east and north of the city. Nevertheless Leval's danger was so manifest that Soult on the 3rd of August marched with four regiments of cavalry and a part of Conroux's division for Granada, in order to manœuvre against Freire's post, ordering Godinot's division at the same time to move by way of Jaen upon his right flank and rear. On the 7th Soult reached Granada, and Aug. 7. by the 9th came up before Freire's position at Gor; Aug. 9. on which same day Godinot utterly defeated a detachment which the Spanish General had sent out to parry his turning movement. Freire therefore retreated under cover of night; but he was overtaken by the French cavalry next day, and his troops were broken up and hunted in two separate bodies into the hills. They rallied, however, and reunited under the command of Blake before the city of Murcia, where

1811. they proceeded to fortify a strong position. Soult meanwhile pressed the pursuit no farther than to the frontier of Murcia, but, returning to Granada, organised a number of flying columns under Godinot to quell the insurrection within the mountainous quadrilateral that lies between Granada, Baza, Motril, and Almeria. This work proved to be long, hazardous, and difficult, and it was still in progress, not unchequered by galling reverses to the French, when a new combatant came upon the scene in the person of Ballesteros. This officer, realising that a diversion was needed in favour

Sept. 4. of Murcia, landed on the 4th of September with three thousand men at Algeciras, and marching up to Ximena rekindled the whole of the insurrection in the Sierra de Ronda. Sundry little successes soon compelled Soult to despatch against him a strong column, which sustained a serious defeat near San Roque on the

Sept. 25. 25th of September. Much irritated, Soult summoned Godinot from the east, and calling up simultaneously two columns from Victor's force before Cadiz, endeavoured to pen in Ballesteros between these three bodies. The Spanish General thereupon quietly retired southward and took refuge beneath the guns of Gibraltar, from which secure position he laughed at the ten thousand men of Godinot. Exasperated by his failure, Godinot marched against the second base of Ballesteros, Tarifa ; but there was only one road—that running along the coast—by which he could take his cannon with him,

Oct. 18. and he was driven from that with some loss by the fire of the British cruisers. Meanwhile the French troops from Cadiz marched away from before Gibraltar in two separate bodies ; and Ballesteros, following after one of them commanded by General Semple, surprised

Nov. 5. it, dispersed a battalion of Spaniards enlisted by the French, and captured furthermore one hundred French prisoners and a gun. Soult, infuriated by this petty disaster, threw the blame of his own failure upon Godinot, and reproached him so savagely that the unfortunate General committed suicide. The Duke

of Dalmatia, notwithstanding his temporary success 1811. against Freire, had in fact accomplished nothing by all his multitudinous operations since he had returned to Seville from Badajoz in June; while his troops were worn out and discouraged by long marches after an elusive enemy and by frequent petty defeats.

Let us now leave him for the present and turn northward to Catalonia and Aragon. There it will be remembered that in May Suchet, with the Seventh Corps and half of the Third, was about to undertake the siege of Tarragona, while Macdonald, with the remainder of the Third Corps, was set down to recover the fortress of Figueras. To follow first the fortunes of the former, Suchet's advanced guard came before Tarragona on the 3rd of May, but, owing to the slow march of the siege-
train from Tortosa, was unable to break ground until the night of the 7th. On the 10th, General Campoverde was able to enter the city by sea with four thousand men, thereby raising the garrison to a strength of ten thousand regular troops. The first act of the besiegers was to construct a battery to drive the British men-of-war, under Captain Codrington, to an anchorage out of range of the shore, which was accomplished by the 13th; and the French engineers then turned their attention to a detached work, named Fort Olivo, which commanded the lower town. This was successfully stormed on the night of the 29th with very heavy loss to the defenders; and on the 31st Campoverde sailed from the fortress to collect an army of succour, leaving the garrison still in good heart under the command of General Coutreras, and strengthened by two battalions which had just arrived by water from Valencia. By the middle of June he had gathered together about eleven thousand men; but meanwhile Suchet pushed forward his operations rapidly against the lower town, and on the 17th carried the last of the external defences of Tarragona. The situation of the city was now critical, but Campoverde confined himself to distant diversions without any attempt to molest the besieging force. On

May 3.
May 7.
May 13.
May 31.
June 17.

1811. the 21st, therefore, Suchet stormed the lower town and June 21. thereby closed the harbour to the besieged, though the British squadron still lay in a roadstead not more than a mile away.

June 24. On the 24th Campoverde came so close to Tarragona that Suchet concentrated a portion of his army to meet him ; but the feeble Spanish general never fired a shot, and busied himself with a plot to depose his colleague, General Coutreras, upon false suspicion of cowardice.

June 26. On the 26th new hope was kindled in the garrison by the arrival in the roadstead not only of small Spanish reinforcements from Murcia and Valencia, but of between eleven and twelve hundred British troops¹ under Colonel Skerrett, which had been detached by Graham from Cadiz. Rough weather kept Skerrett on board ship until the evening, but on the 27th he went round the defences with General Charles Doyle, Captain Codrington, and other officers, when all unanimously agreed—as indeed Coutreras himself admitted—that the town was untenable. Graham's orders to Skerrett were clear and strict : He was not to land his troops unless he could be sure of embarking them before a capitulation. Since Skerrett himself had only gained the shore with difficulty owing to the surf, it was very clear that he could not be certain of getting twelve hundred men into boats if the French should make a successful assault. He therefore declined to disembark his men at Tarragona, though he agreed to do so farther up the coast in order to strengthen Campoverde's army of succour. The position was extremely unfortunate, and it is to be regretted that the British detachment should have come upon the scene at all ; for it was too weak to give any help to Coutreras, and yet strong enough to make its departure most depressing to the garrison.

A day later the end came. The French breaching June 28. batteries opened fire on the morning of the 28th with great effect, and at five o'clock in the evening the

¹ The 2/47th, a small detachment of 3/95th, half a company of artillery, and some light companies from Gibraltar.

storming parties rushed to the assault. In half an hour 1811, the French were masters of the fortifications ; but the June 28. Spaniards resisted desperately in the streets, and the exasperated assailants, breaking loose from all control, gave themselves up not only to massacre but to every description of outrage. Not until the next day could the officers with all their efforts restore order ; and the streets were then encumbered with four thousand Spanish corpses, more than half of them civilians, and over one-tenth women and children. Of the Spanish regular troops nearly two thousand perished and eight thousand were captured. The army of Catalonia was, in fact, reduced to insignificance ; and with Tarragona the chief centre of Spanish resistance within the province as well as the main channel of communication with the British fleet was lost. It was a great and genuine success for Suchet, and was achieved at a cost of something over four thousand French soldiers killed and wounded.

Losing no time after his triumph, Suchet marched north to reopen communications with Barcelona, and on the 30th seized Campoverde's dépôt, together with June 30. several ships, at Villanueva. Campoverde himself retired inland to Cervera, where on the 1st of July he July 1. decided, pursuant to the vote of a council of war, to abandon Catalonia entirely, although Figueras was still holding out, and there could be no immediate danger from Suchet. Happily Codrington refused to embark any Catalonian troops, though ready to convey the Valencians back to their own country. Campoverde therefore marched to Arenys de Mar, about twenty-three miles east and north of Barcelona, where the Valencian infantry, over two thousand strong, was shipped off by Codrington. The cavalry, however, some nine hundred men, refused to part with their horses, and rode away to Tudela, where they crossed the Ebro and struck southward to Valencia, eventually rejoining their own general, Carlos O'Donnell, at the end of August, after an amazing march of six weeks over

1811. seven hundred miles of country. Campoverde then July. retired to Vich, where he handed over to General Lacy, who had been sent to supersede him, such miserable remnant of an army as desertion and discontent had left under his command. Too weak to attempt any operation, Lacy withdrew to Solsona, about fifty miles north-west of Barcelona, there to reorganise and recruit his dilapidated forces.

Meanwhile Suchet, who had reached Barcelona on July 9. the 9th, moved northward to Vich to restore communications with Macdonald, and finding that the blockade of Figueras was prospering, led ten thousand men to the great stronghold of Montserrat, which was weakly July 25. garrisoned, and stormed it with trifling loss on the 25th of July. The capture of this sacred place made a profound impression on the Catalonians, and all the more since the fall of Figueras appeared now to be inevitable. Nevertheless that garrison by heroic endurance of extreme privation held out for another month, until at last, after a vain attempt to break through the beleaguering lines, it was compelled by Aug. 19. famine to surrender on the 19th of August. The siege had lasted for over four months, during which time fifteen hundred of the defenders and four thousand of the French had perished.

Overjoyed at the success of his arms in Catalonia, Napoleon now urged Suchet to hasten to the work which he had already prescribed for him in Valencia, and gave him positive commands that his head-quarters must be established in that province by the 15th of September. Let a battle be won and Murviedro be captured and, in the Emperor's opinion, the city of Valencia would surrender. Suchet was not so confident, but obeyed orders; and it will presently be our task to follow the course of his campaign. Meanwhile, however, Catalonia was so far from being subjugated that Lacy, even before Figueras had fallen, made a raid into Aug. 6. France with about a thousand men and, to the frantic rage of Napoleon, raised contributions in the region of

Puigcerda.¹ Five weeks later, with the help of British 1811. men-of-war, Lacy drove the French from the Medas Sept. 11-12. Islands at the mouth of the Ter, and built a fort upon one of them to serve as a base for predatory operations both by land and sea. Having heartened his troops by these successes, he set himself in October to harass the French in earnest on the line of communications between Barcelona and Lerida. On the 4th he surprised a Oct. 4. French post at Igualada, inflicting considerable loss, and followed up this spirited action first by the capture of a convoy, and next by seizing the posts of Cervera and Belpuig, in which, over and above killed and wounded, he took more than two hundred prisoners. Finally he closed the month by a second raid into France. As a consequence of these events the French were obliged to evacuate Montserrat ; and the flickering flame of insurrection, thanks to the enterprise of this daring leader, flared up once again to brightness in Catalonia. Napoleon recalled Macdonald from his command in consequence of these mishaps. Truly Catalonia was entombing the reputations of many French Marshals.

So ebbed and flowed the tide of war around the centre of all resistance to the French in Spain—the forty thousand red-coats under Wellington's command. It cannot be said that the Spanish generals made the most of their opportunities ; and Wellington was bitterly disappointed with one and all of them. He had hoped that Blake would have destroyed the stores at Seville ; but Blake had been afraid even to look at the city. Moreover, instead of taking post in the mountains of Ronda where, threatening both Seville and the besieging lines at Cadiz, he would have been a perpetual thorn in the side of Soult, he had hurried away to Murcia for no good purpose whatever. Elsewhere the miserable feebleness of Campoverde had sacrificed both Tarragona and Figueras ; and only Santocildes in the north had shown both enterprise and

¹ See his wild orders to Suchet of 22nd August 1811. *Corres. de Napoléon*, 18,066.

1811. judgment. "One would have thought," wrote Wellington to Dumouriez, "that, when the whole of the enemy's disposable force was assembled in Estremadura, the French scattered all over the rest of Spain would have had their throats cut, and that every Spaniard being hostile to the French (as I really believe to be the case) there would have been a general rising. Nothing of the kind! That is the extraordinary feature in this war. This is the third time in less than two years that the entire disposable force of the enemy has been united against me, but no one takes advantage of it except the guerillas." "The greater number of the French would have been destroyed," he wrote on the same day to Liverpool, "if all the Spaniards were like the lower orders. However, we must have patience, and we may yet be able to root them out of the country."¹

It is pleasant to catch the echo of Marlborough, and of his "patience which conquers all things," in a second great captain after the lapse of a century. Patience and trust in the unconquerable peasantry of Spain had already wrought more than Wellington himself realised; and the landing of the siege-train, so long kept afloat upon the Tagus, was a circumstance pregnant with meaning for the future. Let us therefore return to the camp at Portalegre, and follow the British army to the close of this fateful year.

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Dumouriez and Liverpool, 4th, 5th July 1811.

CHAPTER VIII

THE cantonments of Wellington's army were distributed 1811. as follows : On the 18th of July the Third and Sixth Divisions were at Castello Branco, the Seventh at Niza, the Light Division at Castello de Vide, the First and Fifth at Portalegre, and the Fourth at Estremoz, within easy reach of Hill ; the entire line measuring from seventy to eighty miles in extent from north to south. As to the operations next to be undertaken, three courses were open to the British General : to renew the siege of Badajoz, to attempt the relief of Cadiz, and to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo. The first of these he rejected as impracticable in summer owing to the unhealthiness of the climate. The second likewise he dismissed at once ; for it was certain that Marmont would follow him to Andalusia, in which case he would find himself confronted with the armies that had faced Graham at Barrosa, Beresford at Albuera, and himself at Fuentes de Oñoro, all united into one. Success was not to be hoped for in such conditions ; and, moreover, as has already been said, there was no object in forcing Soult to amend his original blunder of locking up an indefinite part of his troops in the lines before Cadiz. There remained therefore Ciudad Rodrigo, which upon the whole seemed to be the most promising enterprise. Wellington reckoned Marmont's army very accurately to number about thirty-six thousand men, and that of Bessières (of whose departure he was not yet apprised) at ten thousand more, making forty-six thousand in all. His own force he returned at about fifty-six thousand

1811. British and Portuguese, with the prospect of receiving very shortly an additional five thousand, giving a total of some sixty thousand. But, while pursuing the siege, he would be obliged to leave from ten to fourteen thousand men in Alemtejo to watch the Fifth Corps in Estremadura ; and thus the margin of superiority on the Agueda would be cut so fine that it might vanish altogether. Still there was always hope ; and accordingly on the 18th of July the momentous order was given for the siege-train to be disembarked on the Douro, carried by water to Lamego, and thence overland to Trancoso.¹

This very arduous duty was entrusted to Major Dickson of the Artillery, who at once started for Oporto, where he found two companies of British artillery, and having obtained further three hundred gunners from the Portuguese, proceeded to his work. One hundred and sixty boats were required to take the guns and stores to Lamego, and over a thousand country carts, besides nearly four hundred pairs of bullocks, to transport them over appalling roads to their destination. Indeed the track from Moimenta to Trancoso was so impossible that Dickson asked and obtained leave to establish the dépôt at Villa da Ponte, some twelve miles short of Trancoso, from which point the train could be moved by way of Pinhel to Almeida. Of Dickson's trials in the course of this duty full details may be read in his journal.² There were no proper carriages for the conveying of the Ordnance for long distances ; and he was obliged to fit the limbers with special poles, and to prepare sledges for the mortars. Moreover, certain descriptions of shot were not too abundant, and it was necessary to hunt through many Portuguese fortresses to supplement the number. However, by the first week in September the bulk of the train had arrived at Villa da Ponte, and by the third week the

¹ Wellington Desp. To Liverpool, to Colonel Framingham, and others, 18th, 19th July 1811.

² Printed by the R.A. Institute, *Dickson MSS.* chapter iii.

whole of it was safely stored there; many of the 1811. carriages, indeed, much shaken by a sudden journey over rough roads after three years' stay on board ship, but easily to be repaired and made fit for a farther march. This, however, for reasons now to be explained, was a trial which was to be spared them for some months.

On the 1st of August Wellington shifted his head-^{Aug. 1.} quarters to Castello Branco, and on the following days marched with two divisions and one brigade of cavalry northward for the Agueda. On the 11th the French Aug. 11. outposts were driven in and the blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo was established on the south by the Light Division with head-quarters at Martiago, and by the Third Division with head-quarters at Carpio, the northern side being left to the care of Julian Sanchez and his guerilla-band. On the 12th Wellington moved his own Aug. 12. head-quarters to Fuenteguinaldo, and the remaining divisions were distributed on a broad front more or less in alignment with the blockading force. Farthest to north the Sixth Division lay between Barba del Puerco and Nave de Haver; next to south was the Seventh Division between Villar Maior and Sabugal; and then in succession the First Division at Penamacor and the Fourth at Pedrogão, six to seven miles farther to the south. Lastly, the Fifth was stationed in advance at Perales and Navas Frias to guard against any northwestward movement of Marmont from Plasencia. The cavalry was extended in front of the infantry and beyond its right flank, reaching its extreme southerly point at Idanha a Nova. The line of the infantry cantonments from Barba del Puerco to Pedrogão measured, roughly speaking, seventy miles;¹ but Wellington had now a competent second in command at Penamacor, who could be trusted to handle efficiently all troops not under the Commander-in-Chief's own eye. For

¹ Mr. Oman has given the distance from Barba del Puerco to Penamacor at eighty miles. It is really fifty-three miles as the crow flies, but quite seventy miles by road.

1811. on the 9th of August Graham, having been summoned Aug. from Cadiz, took over the First Division from Spencer ; and the latter, not relishing the advent of a senior officer, went home on pretext of sick leave, and will be seen by us no more.

Marmont, meanwhile, was struggling with the usual difficulty of French commanders in Spain, want of supplies. The districts made over to him for the support of his army were, as he complained, inadequate for the purpose ; while Joseph, far from helping him, threw every obstacle in his way. Intimately connected with the question of supply was, of course, that of transport, necessary even in easier times for the formation of magazines, but now more than ever important since the French army had, as Marmont frankly admitted, exchanged the offensive for the defensive. "Without regular means of transport," he wrote to Berthier on the 14th of May, "it is impossible to move in a country devastated by war, constantly over-run by guerilla-bands and where requisitions are extremely difficult to enforce. . . . This army at the beginning of the last campaign had three hundred provision-waggons ; it has now thirty-four. I beg urgently for twelve to fifteen hundred pack-mules for my supplies ; no doubt they can be speedily bought at Bayonne. The English have twelve thousand pack-animals for their artillery and supplies ; hence all their movements are made at ease, and they draw most of their beasts from Spain." On the 5th of August he reiterated his request, now representing that Massena had left him no more than ten provision-waggons ; and, as it chanced, both letters were intercepted and brought to Wellington.¹ His comment upon them was grim and pithy. "We have certainly altered the nature of the war in Spain ; it has become to a certain degree offensive on our part. . . . Marmont says that he can do nothing without magazines, which is quite a new era in the French military

¹ Both letters are printed in *Wellington Desp.*, ed. 1852, v. 772, 781.

system. . . . They will soon, if they have not already, 1811. come upon the resources of France ; and, as soon as that is the case, you may depend upon it the war will not last long.”¹ Singularly enough the ideas even of Napoleon had changed in respect of this question. There was no more talk of twenty thousand men being able to live in a desert. Bitter experience had put an end to nonsense of that kind ; and the great soldier, learning from his enemies, was actually trying to organise a service of “rolling magazines” to carry twenty days’ provisions for sixty thousand men.² “This method,” he sagely observed, “could be very advantageous employed in Holland, Portugal, and all countries where supplies are dear.” Had he thought of it a little earlier he might have saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers, and perhaps have driven the British out of the Peninsula. But such a system had little place in his conception of war.

Another terrible obstacle to Marmont’s progress was the interception of drafts and convalescents, on their way to rejoin his army, by the generals upon the lines of communication. These small parties, placed for the time under officers who had no interest in them or authority over them, were constantly stopped by the commanders aforesaid to perform any troublesome work or fatigue which would otherwise have fallen upon their own troops ; and, being nobody’s children and under nobody’s care, they soon sank into a state of moral and physical deterioration which ruined them as soldiers even when it did not destroy them as men. The Emperor’s orders were hardly efficacious to check this evil. According to the arrangement of the Chief of the Imperial Staff, over seven thousand men and eleven hundred horses were to have left Burgos in the first fortnight of August for the army of Marmont ; but they did not reach him until the 15th of September,

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 27th August ; to Wellesley, 30th August 1811.

² “Magasins ambulants,” see *Corres. ae Napoléon*, 17,814, 17,821.

1811, and then only by special intervention of Napoleon himself.¹ Nevertheless the Marshal had an advantage, of which Wellington for some time remained ignorant, in the arrival of two divisions, jointly about thirteen thousand strong, under Generals Caffarelli and Souham, which had been sent from France by Napoleon to reinforce the armies of the North and of Portugal. Wellington, unaware of their coming, had naturally made no allowance for this in his calculations for the approaching campaign, and the error was one which might prove to be serious.

For the first fortnight the two hostile armies remained quiescent. Various rumours as to Wellington's intentions were current in the French camp, but intelligence as to his preparations for a siege gave Marmont the clue to his true design. It was therefore certain that sooner or later the Marshal must take measures for revictualling Ciudad Rodrigo; but there was no immediate hurry, for the supplies within the place were still abundant. Accordingly for the present he contented himself with shifting his head-quarters to Plasencia, moving his Sixth Division and his cavalry to the Pass of Baños, bidding Foy drive away the troops of Castaños from the vicinity of Truxillo and prepare to cross the Tagus, and sending proposals for concerted

Aug. 21. operations to Dorsenne. Meanwhile, by the 21st, Wellington had ascertained that large French reinforcements had entered Spain; and in the course of the next week intercepted papers gave him a much truer idea of the strength that might be brought against him. On

Aug. 26. the 26th Marmont advanced his head-quarters and the whole of his troops slightly northward; and, combining this movement with his latest intelligence, Wellington divined that the Marshal would not pass the mountains until Dorsenne could join him on the Tormes, when the two French armies could operate together against him. A report, that Napoleon on the 19th of July had himself reviewed some of the reinforcements for Spain,

¹ *Mémoires du Duc de Raguse*, iv. 57, 196, 218, 225.

led Wellington even to conjecture that the Emperor 1811. was about to take command in the Peninsula in person.¹

And here a very short digression may be permitted in order to explain that Napoleon had no idea of entering Spain, but was busily planning a diversion on the British coast. Early in June he had begun the formation of a new camp at Boulogne, and a few days later he gave orders for the flotilla to be again prepared for sea. The numbers of the military force which he proposed to employ varied from thirty to eighty thousand men ; and these were to be used at one time for a landing in Ireland, at another for the burning of Chatham dockyard, at a third for a descent upon the Channel Islands. At any rate the flotilla was to be moored ready for sea at any moment throughout the months of September, October, and November, and England was to be kept for all this period in trembling suspense. The British Ministry was indeed a little uneasy ; but Wellington, with his usual common sense, pointed out that an old French regiment had lately been sent from Cherbourg into Spain, and that this would never have been done if Napoleon had seriously contemplated a disembarkation on the British Isles. The camp at Boulogne was in fact simply a device for converting the training of raw conscripts into a diversion. As such it was ingenious enough, and Napoleon carried his feint so far as to embark himself at Boulogne on the 20th September and superintend a very feeble and harmless attack upon a British frigate off the harbour. The exploit ended on the 21st in the capture of a French pram, and consequently did not find a place in the pages of the *Moniteur*.²

¹ *Mémoires du Duc de Raguse*, iv. 60-62. *Wellington Desp.*, to Liverpool, 21st, 28th Aug. ; to Craufurd, 28th Aug. 1811.

² *Corres. de Napoléon*, 17,792, 17,856, 17,875-6, 17,881, 17,909, 17,946, 17,965, 18,000, 18,010, 18,023, 18,030-1, 18,039, 18,059, 18,123, 18,237. *James's Naval History*, 1811. *Wellington Desp.*, to Liverpool, 21st Aug. 1811.

1811. In view of the return of Marmont northward, Wellington on the 27th ordered the First and Fourth Divisions to draw nearer to Fuenteguinaldo ; and on Aug. 29. the 29th an intercepted letter from Foy confirmed the British Commander's conjecture that a combined movement of Marmont and Dorsenne upon Ciudad Rodrigo Sept. 3. was at hand. Information was received on the 3rd of September that Dorsenne, having driven back the Galician army, was advancing by forced marches upon Salamanca from Zamora, and that his troops numbered some twenty-five thousand ; from which Wellington inferred that the Allies would shortly have to do with at least fifty thousand men. His own force at the moment counted about forty-six thousand, not quite thirty thousand of them being British. The low strength of the red-coats was due to the fact that fourteen thousand men were on the sick-list, the sufferers belonging chiefly to regiments which had either just landed in the Peninsula, or had taken part in the expedition to the Scheldt, though fever had left its mark also upon all who had been encamped on the Guadiana. With the certitude of inferiority of numbers, it was very clear that Wellington could not fight a battle to prevent the revictualling of Ciudad Rodrigo ; but it was at any rate something to have compelled the concentration of a large force for that purpose ; and the British Commander, fully alive to the importance of diminishing French pressure upon other districts and to Marmont's difficulties of transport and supply, determined to hold his ground at all risks for a time. He had selected two strong positions on the edge of the central mountain chain of the Peninsula, where he could turn and form a front if the French should attempt any offensive movement. At the best he might find that their numbers had been as greatly diminished as his own by sickness ; at the worst he could, by forcing them to remain together, compel them to consume the greater part of the supplies which they had brought up to revictual Ciudad Rodrigo.¹

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 18th Sept. 1811.

Meanwhile Marmont had begun his march over the 1811. Sierra de Gata, leaving Foy's division only behind him with orders to make a demonstration towards the Pass of Perales. On the 22nd of September Montbrun's Sept. 22. cavalry and one division of infantry reached Tamames, while on the same day Dorsenne's force reached San Muñoz, some miles farther to the north. On the 23rd Sept. 23. the two armies united with a joint strength of some fifty-eight thousand men, of whom between four and five thousand were cavalry. On the 23rd also Wellington, leaving the Third and Light Divisions in their former station, brought up the Fourth to Fuenteguinaldo and echeloned the rest of the army, with the exception of the Fifth Division,¹ between that place and Fuentes de Oñoro. Graham, who was in command of the left wing of the army, was uneasy at this dispersion of the troops, and would have preferred that his chief should concentrate at once about the chosen position at Fuenteguinaldo. In the course of the day the French advanced guard came up and communicated with Ciudad Rodrigo; and on the 24th they entered the city and pushed a large Sept. 24. force of cavalry to west of it. Still Wellington made no change in his dispositions; and on the 25th Sept. 25. Marmont decided to make a strong reconnaissance, in order to ascertain the truth about the British preparations for a siege. Dorsenne was persuaded to spare some of his cavalry for the purpose; and it was agreed that this force should proceed towards Espeja while Montbrun with the greater part of his division should advance upon Fuenteguinaldo.

Accordingly at about eight in the morning General Wathier with his own and Lepic's brigades—about thirteen hundred sabres,—after leaving six squadrons in Carpio, advanced with the remaining eight across the Azava. The British fell back before them; and Wathier, halting half of his squadrons close to the river, pushed the rest through a wood after

¹ This, it will be remembered, was at El Payo at the summit of the Pass of Perales.

1811. the retiring British. These were charged by two Sept. 25. squadrons, one of the Fourteenth and the other of the Sixteenth Light Dragoons, and were driven back ; but they rallied and were again advancing when they were staggered by a volley from the light companies of Hulse's brigade, which Graham had ordered up to the edge of the wood. Before they could recover themselves two squadrons of the Fourteenth and as many of the Sixteenth dashed into them and hunted them for two miles back to the Azava with a loss of nearly fifty killed, wounded, and taken. The British casualties did not exceed twelve, so that upon its own scale this was a brilliant little affair.

On the side of Fuenteguinaldo matters were more serious. Starting with four brigades, say twenty-five hundred sabres, Montbrun made straight for the ground occupied by the Third Division, which was split up into three fractions along a front of six to seven miles. Half of Wallace's brigade¹ was at Pastores, the other half at El Bodon five miles to south-west ; while one battalion, the Fifth Fusiliers, of Colville's brigade was astride the road from Ciudad Rodrigo some two miles north-west of El Bodon, and the remaining battalions two to three miles farther south-westward. Moreover there were two roads leading to Fuenteguinaldo, the one by Pastores, La Encina, and El Bodon, the other passing west of the last-named village over the ridge held by the Fifth ; and hence it was impossible to arrange any final disposition of the British troops until Montbrun had shown which route he meant to take. No sooner was it seen that he had chosen the western road than Wellington sent two Portuguese batteries, the Seventy-seventh Foot and five squadrons of Alten's brigade to the support of the Fifth, at the same time calling up the 21st Portuguese and a brigade of the Fourth Division from Fuenteguinaldo to the same point. The situation was perilous ; for, if Montbrun succeeded in breaking through this detachment upon the road, he

¹ Late Mackinnon's, who had gone home on sick leave.

would cut off the battalions at Pastores and El Bodon 1811. from the main body. Happily Marmont could not Sept. 25. believe that Wellington would have kept the Third Division so dangerously scattered unless there were some more solid array concealed in their rear ; and he therefore gave orders for his cavalry to advance alone without sending for infantry to second them.

Meanwhile Wellington in person had drawn up his little body of men so as to cover the position to the best advantage. The ground which he occupied was a rocky ridge, intersected by stony hollows, through one of which ran the road. In this central hollow were posted two squadrons of the 1st German Hussars, with the two batteries, backed by the Fifth, on their right, and another squadron of Hussars, together with two squadrons of the Eleventh Light Dragoons, in echelon to their left rear. Montbrun for his part divided his cavalry into three columns and pushed them up the steep ascent against the three sections of the defending force, the Portuguese batteries plying them with a murderous fire as they advanced. As his central column drew near the crest of the hill, the leading squadron of the German Hussars charged and, being well supported by the second squadron, forced the French back to the foot of the ascent. On the British left the third squadron and the Eleventh were equally successful ; but on the right the French dragoons in spite of heavy losses broke into one battery and captured four guns. Before they could rally, however, Major Ridge brought forward the Fifth in line ; and these, after pouring in a heavy fire, charged with the bayonet and drove the dragoons headlong down the slope. The Portuguese gunners thereupon returned to their pieces and reopened fire ; while Montbrun sent out fresh squadrons to renew the attack. Wellington's cavalry, however, by repeated charges of single squadrons kept them back for a time, the Seventy-seventh, which had meanwhile come up, likewise taking a share in the defence. Thus the combat was maintained

1811. for some hours, until Thiébault's division of infantry, Sept. 25. which had been summoned by Marmont from Ciudad Rodrigo, was seen approaching in the distance, when Montbrun, abandoning frontal attacks, sent a part of his force round the right flank of the British. Soon after two¹ o'clock in the afternoon Wellington formed the Fifth and Seventy-seventh—about a thousand bayonets jointly—into a single square, with the Twenty-first, which had by this time come up, in another square in advance, and ordered a retreat. It was high time, for a few more minutes would have seen the British force surrounded. The cavalry, fearing to be enveloped, galloped away to take refuge with the Twenty-first; and the Fifth and Seventy-seventh were left to bring up the rear alone. Montbrun's horsemen, accompanied by a light battery, instantly swarmed after them on all sides; but, though their round shot fell thick among the red-coats, they could find no weak spot nor perceive any wavering. More than once they dashed close up to the bayonets, but fell away at the critical moment before the steady fire of the infantry. Meanwhile Picton, having with some trouble withdrawn his three battalions from the intricate ground about El Bodon, joined Colville's brigade; and the whole continued the retrograde movement in square, much harassed by the French artillery, but presenting always an unshakable front to the cavalry. At length the British reinforcements from Fuenteguinaldo began to come up, with the Third Dragoon Guards at their head; and Montbrun calling off his cavalry left his enemy to go in peace.

The loss of the French in this engagement was probably about two hundred men; that of Wellington did not exceed one hundred and sixty. Of this number seventy belonged to the cavalry, which had behaved

¹ Beamish and Schwertfeger say 3 o'clock; but Beamish adds that the force reached Fuenteguinaldo, which he describes as six miles distant, by 4, which is absurd. The real distance, according to Wyld's *Atlas*, is about four miles and a half.

superbly, having delivered from thirty to forty separate attacks in the course of the fight. The whole affair of Sept. 25. course was a repetition on a smaller scale of the retreat of the Light Brigade at Fuentes de Oñoro ; and in both actions the same features are conspicuous, namely the powerlessness of the French cavalry against the British squares, and the ease with which it could be thrust back by a mere handful of British or German horse. The latter point is especially remarkable ; but it must be mentioned that the ground over which the French advanced to the attack was exceedingly bad, for it was broken by cliffs and precipices,¹ so that it must have been difficult to bring the squadrons forward a second time when once they had been repulsed. At the same time it should seem that Montbrun's tactics were exceedingly faulty, and that, if he had made his turning movement at the first instead of at the last, he might have accomplished much more—might indeed have done Wellington very serious mischief. Even as things were, the escape of the Third Division was due mainly to the fact that Dorsenne had summoned Thiébault's division before Marmont did so, and that consequently it had marched for some distance in the wrong direction before the Marshal's messenger could reach it. As a matter of fact the detachment at Pastores was actually cut off ; but Colonel Trench of the Seventy-fourth with excellent judgment crossed to the right bank of the Agueda, made his way to Robleda, recrossed the river there, and brought both of his battalions safely to Fuenteguinaldo at midnight, having captured a French patrol on the way.

Thus by his own coolness, the admirable behaviour of the troops, and some good fortune Wellington had brought off the Third Division from a most perilous situation with little loss. But the danger was not yet over. At nightfall of the 25th he had in his chosen position at Fuenteguinaldo only two British divisions and one Portuguese brigade of infantry, with Alten's,

¹ This is the expression used by Londonderry, who was present.

1811. De Grey's and Slade's divisions of cavalry, making
Sept. 25. from fifteen to sixteen thousand men in all. While
the engagement was in progress he had directed Graham
to draw back the First and Sixth Divisions and all the
troops on the left to Nave de Haver ; sending at the
same time orders that the Seventh Division was to
move to Albergueria and Casillas de Flores, and that
the Light Division was to come in close to Fuente-
guinaldo. But these instructions were by no means
adequate to the occasion. Graham at Nave de Haver
was still ten to twelve miles from the main body of
the Allies ; and meanwhile Marmont had summoned
every man of his infantry to him by forced marches, so
Sept. 26. that noon of the 26th found him with at least forty
thousand men in front of the British lines. Moreover
Craufurd for some reason had not obeyed Wellington's
commands. He had set out indeed at nightfall, but
had halted after traversing three or four miles, and did
not move again until daylight, with the result that his
division did not reach Fuenteguinaldo until late in the
afternoon. His disobedience greatly increased the peril
of Wellington. Graham had received exact directions
concerning the line of his retreat in certain contingencies,
so that the Commander-in-Chief, except for Craufurd's
absence, might have retired during the night before the
bulk of Marmont's forces had come up ; but, for the
sake of the Light Division, he was obliged to remain
in position throughout the whole of the 26th, with an
enemy of twice to thrice his strength within striking
distance. "I am glad to see you safe," observed
Wellington dryly to Craufurd, when that officer at last
appeared. "Oh, I was in no danger, I assure you,"
answered Craufurd. "No, but I was through your
conduct," retorted the other. "It is very desirable
that the general officers commanding divisions should
understand that the divisions under their command
respectively are only parts of an army, which must be
governed by system and rule, and that every departure
from the system ordered and the rule laid down,

however convenient to the particular division, must be inconvenient to the army at large and therefore detrimental to the service." So had Wellington written to Craufurd less than two months before this ; but the principle was one which, with all his undoubted merit and ability, the headstrong little subordinate was unable to grasp. "He's damned crusty to-day," was his muttered comment, as Wellington left him to digest his two curt sentences. It occurred to him readily that the Commander-in-Chief might be ill-tempered, never that Robert Craufurd could be in fault.¹

Happily no harm came of the late arrival of the Light Division. The lessons of Bussaco and other actions had not been lost upon Marmont ; and he had no intention of rushing blindly to the attack. Some portions of the position of Fuenteguinaldo had been fortified, though very incompletely, with field-works ; the numbers and dispositions of the Allied troops were unknown ; lastly, Wellington was a cautious commander and unlikely to offer battle unless he felt sure of success. Marmont accordingly after much reconnaissance decided not to hazard an action ; and the British troops were regaled with the spectacle of the entire French army, division after division, coming up and deploying from daylight until dark as though for a great battle on the morrow. As a matter of fact Marmont had no intention of attacking ; but Wellington had likewise no idea of giving him anew the opportunity that he had lost. Soon after dark the Allied troops began their retreat southward in two columns by Forcalhos and Aldea da Ponte upon Wellington's second chosen position at Alfaiates ; the Light Division and the 1st Hussars being left to keep the watch-fires burning and to follow at midnight. At the same time the Fifth and Seventh Divisions were directed upon the same point from El Payo and Albergueria, and Graham's force was bidden to retire upon Bismulla.

¹ Larpent's *Journal*, p. 85. Wellington to Craufurd, 30th July 1811.

1811. Singularly enough Marmont likewise turned about and retreated at precisely the same time ; but towards midnight General Thiébault (according to his own account) noticed that the British fires were burning low and, sending men to verify his suspicions, discovered that the Sept. 27. British camp was deserted. Marmont, being apprised of this, ordered his columns to countermarch ; but the bulk of his army had already withdrawn to some distance, and only the cavalry of Wathier and Montbrun, with the infantry divisions of Thiébault and Souham, were on the spot to begin the pursuit at once. With so small a force Marmont was in no condition to give Wellington serious trouble before the concentration of the Allied army should be accomplished.

Following the routes taken by Wellington, Montbrun and Souham marched by Forcalhos, Wathier and Thiébault by Aldea da Ponte. The former column, finding the Fifth and Light Divisions in position by Aldea Velha, about three miles south-west of Forcalhos, was brought to a stand ; but Thiébault, on discovering that Aldea da Ponte was held only by the light companies of Pakenham's brigade,¹ manœuvred them out of the village with three battalions and occupied it. Unwilling to give up this advanced post, Wellington drove the French out again in turn with Pakenham's brigade, supported by a Portuguese regiment ; but, Souham having joined Thiébault, the British were dispossessed of the village once more at nightfall, when Wellington left it in the hands of the French. The casualties of the Allies in this trifling affair numbered just one hundred men, thirty of them falling upon the cavalry brigades of Slade and De Grey, which had skirmished for a long time with the French horse. The losses of the French numbered one hundred and fifty.

Sept. 28. On the following morning Wellington's army, now completed by the arrival of Graham at Rendo, was drawn up in the position which he had chosen for action, on a line from five to six miles long across a

¹ 1/7th ; 1/23rd ; 1/48th.

great bend of the Coa between Quadrasaes and Rendo. 1811. On the right the Fifth and Light Divisions, with Alten's, Sept. 28. Slade's and De Grey's brigades of cavalry were massed between Quadrasaes and Souto, a village about three miles north and west of it. In the centre the Third Division was at Cardeal, with the Seventh Division in second line; the Fourth Division was at Boucafarinha; and Pack's Portuguese brigade at Villaboa. On the left Anson's cavalry brigade and the First and Sixth Divisions were at Rendo, with a brigade in advance at Ruvina. Far out to the left, on the other side of the Coa, M'Mahon's Portuguese infantry were at Rapoula, and Madden's Portuguese cavalry at Minxella, eight miles to north, to watch the fords at that point and to communicate with the Spaniards of Carlos d'Espana at Castello Mendo, yet another seven miles farther north. Rather less wide on the right flank a brigade of the Fifth Division was thrown out to Valle d'Espinho. The position was exceedingly strong, so strong indeed that although the river (everywhere fordable at the moment) ran along the rear of it with only a single bridge at Sabugal, Wellington asked for nothing better than for Marmont to attack.¹

It was not likely, however, that Marmont would accommodate him, now that the Allied army was really concentrated on such formidable ground, when he had declined to attack him on very favourable terms at Fuenteguinaldo. After reconnaissance the Marshal decided that his enemy was too powerfully ensconced to be assailed, ordered his columns to cantonments once more, and brought up the rear with the troops at Aldea

¹ Misled by the false date of 28th of September at the head of the orders printed in *Suppl. Desp.* xiii. 710 (which is correctly given in *Despatches*, ed. 1852, v. 290, as 27th), Mr. Oman has placed the troops on the 28th where they were, more or less, on the 27th, between Aldea Velha and the bridge of Rapoula. He none the less describes the position as having both flanks resting on the Coa, and as seven miles long. Aldea Velha, however, lies beyond the source of the Coa; and the distance from Aldea Velha to the bridge of Rapoula as the crow flies is ten miles.

1811. da Ponte. His brief campaign had been to outward appearance successful. He had revictualled Ciudad Rodrigo, and had destroyed a large supply of gabions and fascines which had been prepared by Wellington for the siege of that fortress. But he had missed his chance of striking a telling blow ; he had spared Wellington when isolated at Fuenteguinaldo, and Graham when isolated at Nave de Haver ; he had left the British siege-train, of whose existence he had gathered information, untouched and even unthreatened at Villa da Ponte ; and lastly, in order to keep his army in the field, he had been obliged to draw upon the magazines in Ciudad Rodrigo and had consumed four out of the six months' rations which he had thrown into the place for the garrison. In his report to the Emperor¹ he of course suppressed the fact that he had begun his retreat on the night of the 26th, and represented that he had made his dispositions for attack on the 27th. He added the further fictions that he had taken two hundred prisoners, and that the loss of the Allies amounted to six or eight hundred men. Marmont was a good and gallant soldier, but too weak to escape from the atmosphere of falsehood in which Napoleon's Empire lived, moved, and had its being.

Oct. 1. On the 1st of October Marmont and Dorsenne parted company ; and the Army of Portugal returned to the posts which it had evacuated at the beginning of September. Head-quarters were at Talavera ; and three divisions of infantry besides Montbrun's cavalry lay in adjoining villages to westward, with the light cavalry and another division of infantry beyond them on the Alagon. Clausel's division was about Avila to gather supplies ; and Foy's was despatched to Toledo. It will be remembered that this last division, after long endurance of the bad climate of Truxillo, had been sent up the Pass of Perales to make a diversion during the advance of Marmont upon Ciudad Rodrigo ; but in spite of most trying marches it had reached El Payo only on

¹ Printed in *Wellington Desp.*, ed. 1852, v. 783.

the 29th, when Marmont and Dorsenne were both in retreat, and had then hastened to retire from a dangerous position. In consideration, therefore, of the sickness and hardship that had thinned its ranks, it was stationed in a healthy quarter where food was abundant; and the intermediate post of Truxillo for communication with the Fifth Corps was abandoned.

Dorsenne for his part left Thiébault's division and one brigade of Souham's with some light cavalry at Salamanca, and led the rest of his army to its former posts in the valley of the Douro. One division of the Guard was employed in supporting the advance of Bonnet to re-occupy Asturias, which had been imperatively ordered by Napoleon. Bonnet reached Oviedo and Gihon practically without opposition from the Army of Galicia, and resumed his hopeless task of holding down with eight thousand men a country which was never still except where it was under the shadow of the French bayonets.

Wellington also put his troops into winter quarters; the First, Fifth and Sixth Divisions about Guarda, Celorico and Freixedas; the Seventh at Penamacor; the Third and Light at Fuenteguinaldo, El Bodon, Martiago and Zamarra; the Fourth about Gallegos; the light cavalry along the line of the Coa from Freixedas to Castello Mendo; and De Grey's heavy brigade about Alverca. For the present he could do no more than watch Ciudad Rodrigo and recommence the provision of material for the siege. The only active work done during the winter months was a foray carried out by Julian Sanchez on the 15th of October, which resulted in the capture of the cattle belonging to that fortress, and by happy chance of the Governor also. In fact matters were again at a deadlock, though Wellington could congratulate himself upon the year's work. He had driven the French from Portugal; and, though he had since taken great risks in the presence of their army both at Fuentes de Oñoro and at Fuenteguinaldo, he had, partly through his own skill, partly through great

1811. good fortune, come off the better rather than the worse.

It is now necessary to return to the doings of Hill and his detachment, who had been left with about sixteen thousand men to watch the Fifth Corps, which was of much the same strength, in Estremadura. Hill's head-quarters were at Portalegre, and his troops were stationed about that place, Ville Viçosa and Santa Eulalia; with the remnants of the defeated Spaniards of the Gebora—three or four thousand strong under Castaños—to north and east of him at Valencia de Alcantara and Caçeres. The duty enjoined upon Hill was simply that of neutralising d'Erlon who, with headquarters at Zafra and a strong detachment at Merida, had received from Soult instructions to neutralise Hill. Both Generals had been cautioned by their respective Commanders to retreat at once if threatened by superior numbers, Hill by Gavião upon Abrantes, and d'Erlon either north-eastward towards the Army of Portugal or southward towards the Army of the South, as might seem to him best. Meanwhile it was d'Erlon's business to maintain communications between those armies through Foy's division at Truxillo. During August and the first half of September both corps remained quiet, the only distraction being occasional raids of Castaños's cavalry upon d'Erlon's posts; but

Sept. 15. on the 15th of September Foy's division, as we have seen, was summoned from Truxillo to take part in the operations of Marmont about Ciudad Rodrigo, and at the close of the campaign was sent to Toledo. D'Erlon therefore was ordered to fill up the gap thus created in the chain of the French posts to north-eastward, a duty which could not fail to tax his resources severely. He was obliged to send Girard's division to close the space between the Tagus and the Guadiana, and to extend Claparède's division, with two brigades of cavalry, from the latter river southward to the Sierra Morena. Such dispositions naturally led to a dangerous dispersion of force; but Wellington's information from Cadiz gave

him to understand that Soult was meditating a return 1811. to Estremadura before the end of September, and Sept. there were many reasons—the revictualling of Badajoz among them—which made such a movement the reverse of improbable. The British commander was therefore unwilling at first to take advantage of this dispersion, and reiterated to Hill his original orders not to venture into the plains. It must be added that he was strengthened in this decision by the anxiety of Castaños to strike a blow at Girard, for he suspected that the Spaniards had their own motives for wishing to involve him in operations in Estremadura.¹

Soult, however, was too busy with the affairs of Andalusia to spare any attention for the neighbouring province ; and on the 15th of October, Hill, being Oct. 15. satisfied of the safety of the operation, asked for leave to join Castaños in dealing a stroke at Girard, upon which Wellington at once gave his consent. The moment was propitious, for Girard, anxious to enlarge his sphere of supplies, had just marched northward from Merida with some six thousand men to drive back the Spanish detachments, and had advanced as far as Caçeres. Accordingly on the 20th Hill wrote to Oct. 20. ask Castaños for the help of a portion of his troops, promising for his part to bring with him some eight thousand horse, foot and artillery, so as to make up a total force of over ten thousand men. Castaños assented, whereupon Hill with all possible speed and secrecy assembled two British brigades of infantry, one of cavalry, and nine Portuguese battalions at Portalegre,² and began his march before daylight of the 22nd. Climbing the Serra de São Mamede by execrable Oct. 22. roads, the column passed Alagrete and made its first halt at La Cordosera, having battled against a terrible

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Hill, 8th August, 4th, 10th, 16th October 1811.

² *Howard's Brigade*, 1/50th, 1/71st, 1/92nd; *Wilson's Brigade* (late Abercromby's), 1/28th, 1/34th, 1/39th; *Long's Cavalry Brigade*, 9th and 13th L.D.; 2nd Hussars K.G.L.; 4th, 6th, 10th, 18th Portuguese (each 2 batts.), 6th Caçadores (1 batt.).

1811. storm of wind and rain ever since noon. Early on the Oct. 23. 23rd the leading troops reached Alburquerque, where Hill received intelligence from Castaños that Girard, after moving as far westward as Aliseda, had fallen back to Arroyo del Puerco and Cáceres, and that the Spanish contingent under Morillo and Penne Villemur had reoccupied Aliseda. Accordingly on the 24th Hill started north-eastwards in two columns, which met at Aliseda Oct. 25. on the 25th; and on the same day Penne Villemur drove the French advanced parties out of Arroyo del Puerco. That night the column made another march in pouring rain to Malpartida, within six miles as the crow flies of Cáceres, only to learn on arriving that Girard had left the latter place on the previous afternoon. Unable to gather information of his direction, Hill halted his own men at Malpartida, and pushed the Spaniards forward to Cáceres. However, intelligence having come in that Girard had taken the road to southward by Torremocha, Hill set his troops again in motion at three in Oct. 27. the morning of the 27th, directing them upon Aldea de Cano and Casas de Don Antonio, well to south of Torremocha, in the hope of intercepting his enemy. Once more he was disappointed. On the way he was informed by the peasantry that Girard had again marched on south-eastward over the Sierra de Montánchez to the village of Arroyo Molinos,¹ leaving a rear-guard at Albalat on a by-road some six miles east and south of Aldea de Cano. There was consolation in this last detail, for it showed that Girard was ignorant of the movements of the Allies; and accordingly Hill resolved to make a final effort to overtake him.

The pursuit was therefore resumed, without changing the route, to Alcuescar, six miles to south and east of Casas de Don Antonio, and twenty-four as the crow flies from Malpartida. The troops reached their

¹ So Arteche writes the name of the village. Its full title, according to the large Spanish map, is Arroyo Molinos de Montánchez—stream of the mill of Montánchez—not Arroyo dos Molinos—two-mill-stream—as borne on the colours of the 34th.

destination after dark, the Seventy-first occupying the village and throwing out a chain of sentries to prevent any one from giving information to Girard, who lay quite unconscious of his danger some four miles away. The rest of the column bivouacked with all possible silence and quietness a little short of the town, excepting one brigade of Portuguese, which was halted at Casas de Don Antonio. At Alcuescar, over six thousand feet above the sea, all fires were forbidden, and a terrific storm of wind and rain, which blew down all tents and soaked every one to the skin, increased to the utmost the discomforts of the weary and much-tried soldiers. At two o'clock on the morning of the 28th the sergeants Oct. 28. went round their companies and roused them in whispers ; the column again moved forward, and four hours of stumbling over an infamous road in the darkness brought them at last undiscovered and veiled by a dense fog to within a mile of Arroyo Molinos. The village itself lies under the south-western extremity of the Sierra de Montanchez, an impassable chain of mountains, of which one spur effectually blocks all egress to the east. Five country roads branch out from Arroyo Molinos north towards Montanchez, west towards Alcuescar, north-east upon Truxillo, and south-west upon Medellin and Merida respectively. Hill therefore divided his force into three columns. Of these Howard's brigade supported by Morillo's Spanish infantry, the whole under command of Colonel Stewart of the Fiftieth, was to advance straight upon the town, holding the Fiftieth and three guns in reserve ; Wilson's brigade and three Portuguese battalions, with three guns, under General Howard were to move to the right so as to cut off all retreat by the two southerly roads ; and lastly the cavalry under Sir William Erskine was held ready for any emergency.

Girard, as it happened, had arranged for an early start ; and one of his brigades—that of Rémond—together with a regiment of cavalry had marched away before daylight, and was gone past call or view. The

1811. remainder of his troops were actually filing out of the Oct. 28. village, the rear-guard and baggage being still within it, when the Seventy-first and Ninety-second came charging down the street, sweeping everything before them at the bayonet's point. A few of the French cavalry, forming part of the rear-guard, appear to have attempted resistance, for they cut down some of the British infantry ; but the surprise was so complete that they found no support. Dozens of prisoners were captured before they could escape ; and Girard himself had only taken the alarm a few minutes earlier, and was hurrying his troops out of the village with all possible haste. Having brought them clear of the streets he faced them to west, so as to present a front towards his enemy, and formed his six remaining battalions in two squares with their right flank within a hundred yards of the town, and the left, covered by cavalry, midway between the two roads to Merida and Medellin. His design was evidently to retire to Merida ; but, before his formation was complete, the Seventy-first opened fire from behind garden-walls upon his right flank, while the Ninety-second filed out, formed line at right angles to it, and prepared to charge. The latter regiment, however, was forbidden to fire, and suffered some slight loss, until the three guns attached to Howard's brigade came up and began to ply the helpless French column with grape. Then the enemy attempted to move off ; but finding the road blocked by the Allied horse, Girard ordered his mounted troops to drive them off at all costs, and changing the direction of the infantry from south to east, headed straight for the road to Truxillo. Bad roads and darkness had delayed the arrival of Long's brigade ; but Penne Villemur and his Spanish squadrons gallantly assailed the two French regiments of cavalry, until the 2nd German Hussars, together with a squadron of the Ninth Light Dragoons, came up, and after a sharp conflict defeated the French completely, capturing over two hundred prisoners. Among them was the French brigadier, Bron, who after shooting two dragoons

of the Ninth, finally gave up his sword to a trumpeter 1811.
of the same regiment.¹ Oct. 28.

Meanwhile Howard's column was marching with all its speed round the southern flank of the French, striving to reach before them a promontory of the Sierra, about which runs the road to Truxillo, so as to cut off their last hope of retreat. The French guns led the way at a trot, and the light companies of Wilson's brigade diverged from their true direction in a vain effort to overtake them, until Hill bade them leave the guns to the cavalry. The British General then galloped on alone with his aide-de-camp and orderly to the point of the promontory, where the light companies presently joined him just as the French column came up. Hill would not allow them to fire, but ordered them, though no more than two hundred against fifteen hundred, to charge with the bayonet. They charged accordingly, led by Lieutenant Blakeney of the Twenty-eighth; but Girard, who was himself wounded, had already given the order to his men to disperse, and showed the way by throwing himself upon the rocky hillside above him. Some two or three hundred men seem to have had time to follow him before Blakeney's troops closed with the main body which, seeing the British converging upon them from all sides, laid down their arms. Girard and his companions pursued their way over the hill, which just at this point ran out into a long spit, with the light companies in eager chase; descended again into the plain on the other side; and finding cavalry awaiting

¹ Cannon's *Record of the Ninth Lancers*, pp. 42-43. This states that the whole regiment was engaged. Schwertfeger and Beamish on the contrary say that one squadron only of the Ninth was with the 2nd Hussars, and I believe them to be correct. Beamish states that Bron was ridden down by the Hussars and picked up by the 9th. Cannon's account affirms that Bron was trying to escape in his carriage, when he was captured, which seems incredible. Mr. Oman, following another story, says that Bron was taken in the village before he could mount his horse. The incident is of no great importance.

1811. them there, climbed into the mountains once more.
Oct. 28. Morillo's Spaniards then took up the pursuit, which they pressed for over thirty miles, killing or capturing many of the fugitives, though failing to take Girard himself and his brigadier, Dombrowski. Meanwhile the Thirteenth Light Dragoons had overtaken and captured the guns ; and the work of the British column was thus completed. Of about twenty-six hundred French, who were at Arroyo Molinos, some thirteen hundred were taken, from seven to eight hundred were killed, and only from four to five hundred contrived to escape. Hill's casualties, British, Portuguese, and Spanish, barely exceeded one hundred killed and wounded.

Directly the action was over Hill sent Long's cavalry and the Portuguese regiments, which had not been engaged, in pursuit of Rémond ; but that general, having been warned by some flying dragoons of Girard's mishap, had marched steadily southward without a halt.

Oct. 29. Hill therefore moved off next morning to Merida, and after two days' rest there, returned by Wellington's order to his old quarters at Portalegre, which were reached on the 4th of November. As Wellington said, he had done his business handsomely ; and if by unlucky chance half of Girard's force had not started before he came up, he would have made the blow still more telling. Napoleon was intensely annoyed with Girard, and deprived him of his command, not failing at the same time to express dissatisfaction with Soult for exposing so small a detachment to danger ;¹ but Girard was soon employed again, and did noble service for his master. For the rest it must be observed that the loyalty of the Spanish peasants in giving no warning to the French was an essential feature in the enterprise ; and that Hill's success gave extraordinary pleasure not only throughout Wellington's army, but wherever he was known in Spain. "The man seems to be beloved by all," wrote an officer of the German Legion, who

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 18,312, 18,411.

could have had no motive for such words beyond that 1811. he shared in the general devotion to Hill ; and when in response to Wellington's recommendation the Order of the Bath was conferred upon Hill and he became Sir Rowland, there was for once applause and satisfaction in all ranks from the private to the Commander-in-Chief.¹

Lastly it remains to narrate very briefly, in order to conclude the campaign of 1811, the operations of Suchet on the eastern coast. With some misgivings, for he could not forget the outcome of former invasions of Valencia, Suchet hastened his preparations, and moving from his advanced base at Tortosa crossed the boundaries of the province on the day appointed Sept. 15. by Napoleon with some twenty-two thousand men. Blake, who was in command of the forces opposed to him, could bring into the field about thirty thousand men, including the troops which had fought so bravely at Albuera ; but the Spanish army had little coherency or moral strength, and its commander was not a man who could supply these deficiencies. He made practically no opposition to the advance of Suchet, and before the arrival of the French forces at Murviedro on the 23rd fell back to an Sept. 23. entrenched position behind the Guadalaviar, leaving his adversary confronted by the fortress, formidable through

¹ Of all the regiments engaged at Arroyo Molinos the 34th (1st batt. Border Regiment) alone bears the name on its colours. Why this should be so, I know not, unless it was because the 34th of the French Line was captured in the action, but I imagine the honour to be due to some job. If any regiment deserves to bear this name it is the 92nd, which suffered more heavily than the rest ; but it would be impossible to make the change now without giving the honour also to all other regiments present which, for so small an affair in a really great war, would be absurd.

The best account of Arroyo Molinos is in Blakeney's Autobiography ; but there are also narratives in Sherer's *Recollections* ; Hope's *Military Memoirs* ; *The Adventures of Captain Patterson* ; and *The Journal of a Soldier of the 71st* ; Dickson MSS. iii. 495 ; Hill's despatch is printed in *Wellington Desp.* ed. 1852, v. 351 ; Girard's *ibid.* p. 789.

1811. its great natural strength, of Sagunto. After a vain attempt to carry this stronghold by escalade, the Marshal was constrained to send for his siege-train ; and, having first freed his communications by the capture of Oropesa, opened fire upon Sagunto upon the 17th of Oct. 18. October. On the 18th he made a second assault, which was once more beaten off with serious loss, and he now realised that his misgivings as to the task set to him by the Emperor were but just. It was everything to him to make short work of Sagunto, if it were humanly possible, and yet two attempts to capture the place by surprise had failed completely. At the same time, the successes, already related, of the guerilla-leaders in his rear filled him with apprehension for his communications.

Now, however, Fortune came to his aid. Blake deemed it his duty to march forward to the relief of Sagunto, and, having collected nearly forty thousand men, on the 25th attacked Suchet's force of less than half his numbers with his usual unskilfulness. He was, of course, totally defeated with the loss of five thousand killed, wounded and prisoners, and of twelve guns, the casualties of the French not exceeding eight hundred. As a consequence Sagunto capitulated on the following day ; and thus was removed from Suchet's path an obstacle which, if the garrison had emulated their fellows of Zaragoza and Gerona, might have detained him yet for several weeks. The Marshal then advanced to the north bank of the Guadalaviar, over against Valencia, where only the river separated him from the city and from the entrenched camp of Blake upon the southern bank. The Spanish general, by calling up garrisons and small bodies from Murcia, had raised his army once more to over thirty thousand men, and having command of the bridges could at any time take the offensive. Suchet, what with losses in action, the occupation of captured places, and detachments for minor services, had now little more than fifteen thousand troops at his disposal. He was therefore fain to fortify himself in his new position and await re-

inforcements, which he did with the better hope inasmuch 1811. as the guerilla-bands in his rear sustained during the month of November more than one serious defeat. There let us leave him for the present ; for before following his fortunes further it is imperative to sketch the designs of his great master in Paris.

CHAPTER IX

1811. THE session of 1811 had established Perceval as the first powerful Minister since the death of Pitt ; but, before he could meet Parliament again, his ministry was threatened with dissolution by the retirement of two important members. In the autumn of 1811 Charles Yorke gave up his place at the Admiralty, and in January 1812 Lord Wellesley resigned the seals of the Foreign Office. Yorke alleged as his motive the decline of his health, and distrust of the Prince Regent. Various reasons were assigned to account for the secession of Wellesley, among them the Government's inadequate support of the war in the Peninsula ; but the real truth seems to be that he could not endure to be overruled in the Cabinet. The Regent waited

Feb. 18. for the statutory restrictions upon his power to expire, and then made overtures to Lords Grey and Grenville, which were promptly and decisively rejected. He therefore continued Perceval as his first Minister, who appointed Robert Dundas, Lord Melville, to the Admiralty, and secured the best of all substitutes for Wellesley at the Foreign Office in the person of Castlereagh. It should seem that Castlereagh was anxious to return to his old place at the War Office ; but in the present state of affairs Liverpool very pardonably declined to make way for him ; and indeed Liverpool could justly claim that his direction of the war had not been unsuccessful. For the rest the resignation of Sir David Dundas, and the reinstatement of the Duke of York as Commander-in-Chief in June

1811 had restored efficiency at the Horse Guards and 1811 given unbounded satisfaction to the Army.

All therefore seemed to be going smoothly for the moment ; and Palmerston, on introducing the Army estimates, was able to make a satisfactory statement. The casualties among British soldiers amounted to nineteen thousand, and among foreign soldiers to two thousand, during the past year ; the number of recruits enlisted was twenty-one thousand British and nearly five thousand foreign, so that the net gain was, roughly speaking, five thousand men.¹ Nevertheless the strain on the country was so great that it was necessary to extend to the Irish Militia the indulgence already granted to the English, of permitting one-fourth of the establishment to consist of boys of fourteen years old and upwards. Still more serious was the fact that 1812 was the last of the four years for which the Local Militia had been engaged ; and Ministers were faced, apparently against their expectation, with the prospect that the entire force would in 1813 consist of raw recruits. Castlereagh's idea, when he created the Local Militia, was to pass the entire manhood of the nation through its ranks, and to that end substitution had been forbidden ; but it was difficult to conceive how the principle could be adhered to unless Ministers were prepared to see every one of the men of 1809 take his discharge. An Act was therefore passed reducing the numbers of the Local Militia, allowing men to re-engage for a second term of service, and thereby practically admitting the principle, originally repudiated, of substitution. Thus

¹ The actual figures were :—

<i>British troops</i> —Casualties	.	.	.	19,019
Recruits raised by ordinary enlistment, men	.	.	.	9,532
" " boys	.	.	.	1,940
" " transferred from the Militia	.	.	.	11,452
<hr/>				
Total (omitting boys)	.	.	.	20,984
<i>Foreign troops</i> —Casualties	.	.	.	2,000
Recruits raised	.	.	.	4,795

1811, was abandoned the last hope of enforcing the duty, incumbent upon every able-bodied man, of serving personally in defence of his country.

There was, however, some warrant for lightening the burden of military service at home. The great enemy was in difficulties ; and the year 1811, which had brought him an heir to his throne and had seen him opposed by none but the weaker Powers in Europe, had been the most harassing of his life. Russia was arming, and must be met with arms ; but it was no light matter to move such a host as Napoleon would require, even to the Russian frontier ; and how could he gather that host together until all other enemies were extinguished ? Spain was the mill-stone about his neck ; could he but shake that off, all would be well. He needed only to crush the British, and then he could throw Spain back to Ferdinand or to the Cortes, and have done with it. But his great stroke against the British had failed. Massena had retired discomfited from Torres Vedras ; Soult had not moved to Massena's help until too late ; only Suchet had played his part successfully and well. Paris was sick of Spain ; and the great Emperor was not less so. He would leave despatches from the Peninsula unopened for two or three days, knowing by instinct that they contained bad news. He forged letters from Spain for the *Moniteur* in order to persuade Joseph to abdicate, hoping to thrust upon his brother the responsibility for abandoning the country ; and then, unwilling to acknowledge himself beaten and trusting always to his star, he hoped that Spanish affairs might shift for themselves while he marched against Russia. But his anxiety was intense ; and one day he forgot himself so far as to murmur that, if the English persisted in hostility for much longer, he did not know what would come of it or what he should do.

Still it was not in his nature to neglect any expedient for lightening his heavy task against the Tsar. There were other enemies who might feel disposed to

ally themselves with Russia in case of war, and none 1811. more likely than despoiled and humiliated Prussia. Once again forged letters were published in the *Moniteur*, to terrify King Frederick William with threats of immediate war if he should dream of such an alliance. Deeply engaged in the task of social reform and regeneration, the Prussian statesmen realised that a French invasion would be fatal to their efforts ; yet they were divided in opinion as to the course that should be taken. Scharnhorst, representing the military and patriotic parties, was for frankly siding with Russia, without attempt at conciliating France ; and this was at heart the wish of all parties. But Poland was a point of friction between the two Powers ; and Hardenberg, not less than the King, trusted that either the Tsar would offer to restore Prussian Poland to Prussia in order to wean her from France, or that Napoleon would tender it to her as the price of her secession from Russia. Frederick William, as was usual with him, was for alliance with both rulers at once ; and Hardenberg actually repaired to Paris in May 1811 and offered Napoleon an auxiliary corps, to be under his direct orders, if he would in return make certain concessions, the most important of which was that he should remove his restriction upon the numbers of the Prussian Army. So astute a diplomatist as the Emperor was not to be deceived by this insidious proposal, but for the present he held his hand ; and in July Frederick William sent Scharnhorst secretly on a mission to St. Petersburg, with a letter proposing that he should still feign attachment to France, but that, in case of war between France and Russia, he should join no side but Russia's. Hardenberg was meanwhile assuring the French Ambassador at Berlin that, in the same event, Prussia would place all her resources at the disposal of France ; but simultaneously he reopened negotiations with England for financial assistance in the final struggle against the common enemy.

Napoleon saw through this double game. He was

1811. aware that Prussia was evading the limitation of her army by passing the whole of her young men for a short period through the ranks, and in September he suddenly put his foot down. He announced that, unless Prussia ceased her military preparations instantly, he would march upon Berlin with a hundred and fifty thousand men, and bade her take her choice between submission and annihilation. For a month he left Frederick William in agonising suspense, and then, judging him to be sufficiently frightened, he offered him an alliance upon two conditions—rigorous maintenance of the Continental blockade and reduction of the Prussian Army. The King, he said, must rid himself of the delusion that France was in need of his forces : she could do very well without them, and there was no occasion for Frederick William to turn all his subjects into soldiers. Upon this basis negotiations were opened between the two Powers ; but the Emperor purposely protracted them in order to keep Prussia in terror till the last moment. Early in November Scharnhorst returned with a secret agreement which he had made with Russia, to the effect that, if Prussia were forced into war with her, hostilities should be merely nominal. This suited Frederick William exactly ; but immediately afterwards the Tsar offered him a most secret alliance, offensive and defensive, importing that the two countries should throw in their lot together for all circumstances and at all risks. Once again the unhappy King was confronted with the necessity which was of all the most hateful to him, that of making up his mind. In the hope that lucky chance might yet deliver him from it, he put off the question of the Russian alliance, and sent Scharnhorst to Vienna to ascertain the intentions of Austria.

The Tsar likewise had not failed to press Austria to join Russia ; but Metternich had no idea of obliging him. This statesman was resolved that Austria should stand outside the struggle, and only step in at the last

moment to turn the conditions of peace between the 1811. contending parties to her own advantage. He was not without justification for his attitude. Austria had battled almost unceasingly for Europe against France since 1792, and had suffered bitterly in the contest ; whereas Prussia had selfishly stood aside for ten full years, and Russia had gained far more than she had lost, at comparatively small sacrifice. Metternich therefore told Scharnhorst that the Emperor Francis would come to no agreement with Prussia, and recommended King Frederick William to attach himself to the Tsar. But now important news from the East, which shall presently be related, compelled Napoleon to drive Prussia to a summary decision ; and on the 24th of December he pressed his proposals upon her as an ultimatum. The King shuffled and delayed for several weeks, vainly hoping for relief from some quarter ; and Napoleon had actually given orders for his troops to march upon Spandau before the treaty was signed. 1812. Signed, however, it was on the 23rd of February 1812, Feb. 23. and Prussia found herself bound to an offensive and defensive alliance with France in case of any war on the continent of Europe, and constrained to furnish a contingent of twenty thousand men, should there be hostilities between France and Russia. Yet at the end of March the King had sent a letter to Alexander in these words : "In case of war we will do each other no more injury than is strictly necessary, and we will remember that you and I are one, and shall one day become allies again." It seems marvellous that Napoleon should have wasted so much energy over treaties which he did not expect to be binding either upon himself or upon the other contracting party.

However, in the Emperor's view here was one necessary alliance secured ; of a second with Austria he felt sure on the strength of his marriage, nor was he disappointed. On the 14th of March 1812 a March 14. treaty was signed whereby Austria engaged herself to furnish an auxiliary force of thirty thousand men, in

1812. return for which Napoleon guaranteed to her Galicia, or, if Austria would give up that province, then Illyria in lieu of it, with "further advantages"—by which was meant Silesia and the Danubian Principalities—provided that the war were successful. Metternich was well satisfied. Even while negotiations with France were still pending, Alexander had suggested the partition of Prussia into three divisions, with Silesia for Austria's portion; so that, whatever turn events might take, Metternich could count with tolerable certainty upon making some profit.

In Eastern Europe there remained still three Powers to be conciliated or neutralised in order to make a barrier friendly to France from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, namely, Sweden, Poland, and Turkey. With Sweden Napoleon was worse than unsuccessful. His Ambassador at Stockholm attempted to dictate to Bernadotte as might a Commander-in-Chief's aide-de-camp to a brigadier; and both his tone and the orders to enforce the blockade were distasteful to the ambitious Gascon. Impatient and resentful, Napoleon on the 19th of January ordered Davoust to occupy Pomerania and so to render the blockade effective; and this made the breach with Bernadotte final. The offended Prince threw himself gladly into the arms of Alexander, who offered in return for his alliance relief from the blockade, reconciliation with England, the possession of Norway and the establishment of his April 5. dynasty. On the 5th of April 1812 the treaty was signed; and three weeks later Bernadotte drew up, for the benefit of the English diplomatist, Mr. Thornton, who was staying at Stockholm, a plan for the great war that was to work the deliverance of Europe. In another three months this was destined to ripen into further treaties for the alliance of Russia and England.

In approaching Turkey Napoleon was unfortunate in being belated. During the long and desultory war between that country and Russia in 1811, the armies of

the Porte had met with unwonted success ; and this had 1811. confirmed the Sultan in the resolution to fight on. The agents of France and Austria eagerly encouraged him to further combat, being anxious to keep a large portion of the Tsar's army occupied in the south while Napoleon invaded Russia on the north ; nor was any warning voice heard in Constantinople save that of the English agent, Stratford Canning. This young diplomatist, no more than twenty-five years of age, perceived without instructions of any kind from the Foreign Office the vital importance of bringing the war between Turkey and Russia to an end ; and by sheer force of character and dignity of presence he had made his influence already felt among the Turkish Ministers. In November 1811 matters came to a crisis. Towards the end of October the Russian General Kutusov inflicted a severe defeat upon the Turks at Rustchuk ; and in sudden despair the Turkish General came to an agreement with his adversary as to a suspension of arms and even, in some sort, as to the preliminaries of peace. So momentous a transaction, negotiated independently of the diplomats of Europe, threw all the embassies at Constantinople into a flutter of excitement. The Austrian agent, under directions from Metternich, pressed for the continuance of war. The French chargé d'affaires openly threatened hostilities if peace were made with Russia. Stratford Canning, always without instructions and without authority, took it upon him to mediate between the two belligerents, even addressing himself directly to the Court of St. Petersburg, though England was still nominally at war with Russia. His difficulties were great. The Tsar was at first unwilling to recede from harsh terms which would give him a great accession of territory. The Sultan, at all times naturally averse from the acceptance of humiliating conditions, endeavoured to make every concession the parent of fresh demands. The Powers, as the weeks slipped away, became increasingly active and pressing. Not only Austria but also Prussia joined cordially in

1811. supporting the counsels of France to the Porte ; and Napoleon himself went so far as to write a flattering letter to the Sultan.¹ Against all these opponents Stratford Canning strove indefatigably, strong chiefly in the knowledge that both sides were really anxious for peace, and that the Turkish troops in particular were practically resolved to fight no more. At length 1812. he produced his trump card, a copy of a most secret plan drawn up at Vienna for the invasion of Turkey with a view to the partition of the country, in reliance upon the consent of France. This paper he had received from his predecessor Adair, who had obtained it from some unknown source. Its effect upon the Turkish Ministers was profound. The Russian Court, as the peril of a French invasion drew nearer, also began to appreciate the value of Canning's good offices and to show itself better disposed towards moderation in its claims ; and at length, after anxieties which endured to the very last moment, the Treaty of Bucharest, May 2. signed on the 2nd of May 1812, brought the war between Russia and Turkey to an end. Wellington, attributing this service in excusable ignorance to Castle-reagh, declared that it was the most important that ever fell to the lot of any individual to perform ; and this praise is hardly too high for the young man who in his twenty-sixth year established his right to the title of the "Great Elchi."²

In the matter of Poland Napoleon was cruelly astute in playing upon the feelings of an emotional and adventurous nobility. Alexander had tempted the Poles with the prospect of restoring their ancient kingdom, with himself for King. Napoleon outbid him by the alluring proposal of an independent Poland under his own protection. He wished to agitate the whole country so that the enthusiasm might spread to Russian Poland, and carry the entire people away in a fever of national

¹ This letter is not in the *Correspondance de Napoléon* ; but the intention to write it is indicated in No. 18,232.

² Lane Poole's *Life of Stratford Canning*, i. 138-176.

feeling. This duty he purposed to entrust to Talleyrand ; but that wary individual, foreseeing a great crash, excused himself ; and the Abbé de Pradt was sent as missionary of the glad tidings in his stead. De Pradt, to anticipate events a little, actually went the length of convoking the Diet at Warsaw on the 1st of July 1812, where the re-establishment of Poland was proclaimed amidst joyful acclamations from the members. But after two sittings the assembly was closed ; and, when a deputation waited upon Napoleon a few days later to hear the good news confirmed by his own mouth, he chilled all hearts by an evasive and discouraging reply.

But it was not only in countries outside the French domination that Napoleon felt his position to be insecure : there was disloyalty and discontent enough within the Empire itself. Murat, ambitious of independence ever since he had taken over the kingdom of Naples, had become more than ever embittered against his overlord since the defeat of his attempt upon Sicily in September 1810 ; and the Emperor, exasperated by his failure, had heaped indignities upon him. He had forbidden French soldiers to be commanded by Neapolitan officers ; given orders for the confiscation of all ships of any nationality that were under suspicion of carrying colonial produce ; abolished or lowered the duties levied by Murat upon French manufactures ; refused to send a diplomatic representative to Naples ; and iterated unceasing complaints of the worthlessness of the Neapolitan troops which were serving with his armies in Spain. Murat, for his part, evaded all the Emperor's commands as far as possible, made no attempt to enforce the Continental blockade, and cried out violently against the conduct and character of Napoleon's most trusted servants. Meanwhile he hugged his resentment and bided his time to free himself from tutelage. He intrigued with Austria, Russia, and, it was strongly suspected, with England. In August 1811, however, the secret police of Paris dis-

1811. covered some correspondence extremely compromising to Murat ; and it is probable that, but for the intercession of his wife, he would have been deprived by Napoleon of his throne. But the Emperor was merciful, for he needed Murat's services at the head of his cavalry in the coming campaign, though for the moment he made a show of severity. He gave his vassal to understand that there must be an end of intrigues and conspiracies for independence. A feudatory of the Empire, he explained, must observe the constitution granted to him by his suzerain, obey his commands, furnish ships and troops for his service, and uphold the Continental System : from the day when he neglected to fulfil these duties his rights to the crown of Naples were forfeit. In March 1812 he ordered the man who was Murat's chief agent in fostering Italian national feeling against French rule to leave Naples within forty-eight hours and repair to France. Terrified by this measure and by a final message that those who stirred up trouble would pay for it with their heads, Murat flew to Paris, where a reconciliation was accomplished.¹

All this was necessarily disquieting to the Emperor ; for even though the prime inspirer of mischief might be removed, yet national sentiment among the Italians once kindled would probably be difficult to quench, since there was inflammable material throughout the length and breadth of Italy. Nor was it in Italy alone that restlessness and discontent existed among the dependencies of the French Empire. In Belgium the people chafed more and more against the unending levies of men and of money for the sole benefit of France, aggravated as these burdens were by the total loss of trade owing to the Continental System. Moreover, Napoleon's quarrel with the Pope had touched them in their tenderest place, for nowhere was the Roman Catholic religion more devoutly upheld nor more closely interwoven

¹ For Murat's intrigues at this period see Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, vi. 297-325, vii. 189-238.

with popular custom and tradition ; and in fact the 1811. affront to the head of the Church had turned a weary impatience into sullen and dangerous insubordination. In Holland likewise the enforced abolition of old habits and landmarks, and the imposition of French devices and methods of administration, furnished a perpetual grievance ; while the interdiction of all commerce revolted the deepest instincts of a community to which trade was the very breath of national life.

Lastly, in France itself the unceasing calls for more recruits, together with preparations for war upon a scale so far unprecedented, caused profound and growing uneasiness. In Paris dearth of food and a financial crisis did little to help matters ; and men from sheer dismay began to exclaim that, while the Emperor lived, there could be neither peace nor prosperity. The great benefactor of earlier days, who had restored order and national self-respect, had lost touch with French feeling and French sympathies ; his subjects followed him no longer with faith and enthusiasm, but with misgiving and distrust. "No one," wrote a keen observer,¹ "any longer dares to speak to him frankly, nor knows his real intentions ; every one fears him ; no one loves him." Old and tried subordinates lamented that he lived in a world of his own creating, conceived of his dreams as realities, and built his designs upon a foundation of air.² And this was true. It will hardly be believed that during the last six months of 1811, when scarce a tricolour flag dared show itself at sea, when the Grand Army had begun to concentrate for the march upon Moscow, and the state of affairs in the Peninsula alone might have sufficed to engross all the attention of one man, Napoleon wrote no fewer than twenty orders—many of them long and elaborate—concerning a projected descent upon the British Isles. Fatigued and worn down by hard and inexorable facts, he seems to have found solace and recreation in framing plans for an impossible

¹ Tchernichef, quoted in Sorel, vii. 562.

² See, e.g., *Mémoires du duc de Raguse*, iv. 257.

1811. enterprise against his inveterate enemy, even as a jealous woman finds relief in stabbing the image of a rival with a pin. And yet within the same twenty-four hours the dreamer regained his transcendent common sense, triumphed over an old illusion, and patiently worked out the organisation of the transport-corps, which has been already mentioned, for service in the Peninsula.¹

Thus we are brought back once more to Spain, where the Emperor appeared intent upon complicating as much as possible the details of an already intricate problem before leaving it in great measure to solve itself. On the 18th of September 1811 he had written orders which showed that for the moment he built all his hopes upon Marmont. The Duke of Ragusa was to take d'Erlon's corps under his orders, obtain three thousand cavalry from Soult, and, with an army thus raised to fifty-seven thousand men, was to lay siege to Elvas. Wellington would be bound to hasten to the rescue of the fortress, but, being obliged to leave two divisions to hold Dorsenne's army of the North in check, he could do so only with inferior numbers, and might therefore be beaten. This, said the Emperor, was the only way to regain the offensive, make the English tremble, and take a decisive step towards ending the war. Meanwhile Suchet would have taken Valencia by the time that Elvas had fallen, and could then send Marmont a division. The letter closed with a warning, however, that this scheme was only feasible on the supposition that Wellington possessed no siege-train ; otherwise by beleaguering Ciudad Rodrigo he could force Marmont to forsake all other objects and march to its relief. The last condition, as it happened, vitiated the whole scheme, for Marmont had found evidence enough that Wellington harboured designs upon Ciudad Rodrigo ;

¹ For the transport-corps see *Corres. de Napoléon*, 17,821, 17,877, 18,184 ; and compare with the first the project of invasion written on the following day, No. 17,824. See also his complaint that the prefect of Boulogne must take the preparations for the English expedition seriously and not as a joke, No. 18,000.

but the Marshal's only answer was that he was wholly occupied with the business of feeding his army, and that, when this difficulty had been overcome, he would submit an offensive project of his own.

Before matters could go further, however, the Emperor changed his plans entirely. So far his one successful general in Spain had been Suchet ; and on the 18th of October, at the moment when Suchet was before Sagunto, he issued fresh orders to Marmont, which showed that he had transferred his faith to the commander who had just found his baton in Tarragona. Henceforth the principal object was to be Valencia ; therefore Joseph's army of the Centre must be extended to Cuenca so as to second Suchet ; and the Army of Portugal must fill the gaps thus created in New Castile. A month later the same injunctions were repeated with further developments. By that time Sagunto had fallen, and the capture of Valencia was deemed so urgent that Marmont was instructed to detach six thousand men to reinforce Suchet. The English, said the Emperor, had eighteen thousand men sick, and seemed determined to remain on the defensive ; consequently there would be plenty of time for the advance upon Elvas at the end of January, when the fall of Valencia would release plenty of troops for the field. The letter containing these orders was dated the 20th of November : by the 21st Wellington's sick list had swelled in the Emperor's imagination to twenty thousand men, and his effective army had diminished to as many more. The English were therefore in his view helpless ; and Marmont was accordingly ordered to detach at once twelve thousand men to Valencia, besides three to four thousand more to hold the line of communications, and to hold himself ready to support Suchet generally. When once Valencia had been taken, Marmont would receive forty thousand men from the Armies of the South and West, and then the final conquest of Portugal would be near at hand.

The actual results of this change of policy shall be fully described in their place. For the present it is

1811. sufficient to note two things : the first, that the scheme was built wholly upon the fiction that Wellington had only twenty thousand men in his army fit for duty, whereas he had over thirty-eight thousand British and Germans, besides twenty-four thousand Portuguese ; the second, that the weakening of the army of the senior Marshal, Marmont, for behoof of a junior Marshal, Suchet, was a very doubtful remedy for healing jealousies, and the practical transfer of Joseph's small army of the Centre to Suchet's command a very singular method of upholding that King's authority. Apart from these two considerations there was undoubtedly not a little to be said in favour of making the capture of Valencia a prime object. In the first place the majority of the Grandees of Spain possessed estates in that province, upon which they had lived when all other springs of income had failed ; and the loss of their last resource was likely to hasten their submission. Further, the French would not only cut off the supplies of Valencia from the most formidable of the guerilla-leaders, but by appropriating the provisions and money in that district would be able to found, as it were, a new and advantageous base of operations. If Soult should move eastward and aid Suchet in the reduction of Alicante and Cartagena, the greater part of Andalusia might be turned to this use, and their united hosts might then march in full strength upon Estremadura and Portugal from the east. But even if Soult should find such an undertaking beyond his strength, the possession of the city of Valencia would enable the Army of Aragon (to give it the old title) to communicate by a shorter route than ever before with the Army of the Centre towards Madrid, and with the Army of Portugal on the Tagus. In fact, as Wellington at once perceived, it would greatly enhance the French powers of concentration, upon which depended their ultimate mastery of the Peninsula.¹

These were unquestionably great advantages ; but

¹ Wellington to Liverpool, 4th Dec. 1811.

no mere change of plans could make good the vital defect of the French armies in Spain, the want of unity in command. Joseph, as we have seen, after endless complaints and threats of abdication, had proceeded to Paris in person for the baptism of his nephew, the King of Rome, hoping to obtain some increase both of pecuniary assistance and of administrative authority from his great brother. The Emperor declined to grant the whole of his demands, doubtless realising that Joseph was too much in love with his royal title to abandon it readily ; but it was, after all, a part of his system to make over outlying possessions to his family, as feudatories ; and, with the prospect of a long absence in distant lands before him, he was prepared to go to some lengths in conciliation. He therefore informed Joseph that his monthly dole from Paris should be augmented, that the chief commanders of all the armies should report to him daily, that a royal commissioner should be attached to the Armies of the North and South, so as to secure for the King one-fourth of all receipts, and that, whenever His Majesty were actually present with any army, his orders should be obeyed. But even so the Army of Portugal was left independent ; and, whatever the Emperor might have promised to his brother, his commands to his generals omitted all mention of the daily reports to be made to Madrid, and of the quarter of all contributions to be reserved for Joseph's use. The monthly payments from Paris were irregular and incomplete ; and the Army of the Centre was used as a milch-cow for the feeding of the remaining forces. Moreover, Joseph had not left Paris two months before there were signs that a part of his realm was to be torn from him. The General commanding the Army of Catalonia was instructed on the 25th of August 1811 to address no correspondence to the King and to answer none of his letters ; and there were ominous rumours concerning the annexation of that province to France. Joseph wrote frantic protests. He had always declared that, if

1811. there were any violation of what he called his territory, he would resign his crown. This was in fact precisely what Napoleon wished him to do ; but, when fairly faced with the alternative of submission or abdication, the poor creature could not bring himself to play the man and forget the king. True to his usual habit on such occasions Joseph sent his wife to mediate with the Emperor, who, by reason of his respect for her as a virtuous woman (a rare thing in the Bonaparte family), yielded so far as to promise that Joseph's allowance should be regularly remitted, and the Army of the Centre left intact.

Still not a word was said as to Catalonia ; and in December and January came new signs more than ever alarming to Joseph. The Emperor's special campaigning-equipment, which ever since 1809 had been kept ready, first at Bayonne and later at Vitoria, for his descent upon the Peninsula in person at any moment, was finally removed to France ; and this was presently followed by the recall of the whole of the Imperial Guard and of all Polish troops from Spain.¹ Napoleon had been careful to prepare his brother for this withdrawal of troops, promising that every man taken away should be replaced by another ; and he did indeed presently send forty-two battalions of conscripts to fill the room of forty battalions of seasoned soldiers. But the Army of Spain was not, as he tried to represent, a gainer by the change. At the same time he reorganised the whole of the troops in the Peninsula, according to a plan which shall be shown on a later page, and redistributed the commands all over the country without a word to Joseph. Moreover, at this same period he determined upon the final stroke, the incorporation of Catalonia with France. The public announcement of this alteration was omitted ; but the province was divided into four departments ; and a few weeks later an army of civil officials entered it to take up the work of administration. The

¹ Berthier to Joseph, Jan. 1812. *Arch. Nat.*

story of their arrival forms one of the most singular 1811. episodes in the history of the Empire. The new-comers were men of high rank and station, who had rendered eminent service in other posts, and had been rewarded by titles of dignity. The French officers, from the general to the subaltern, refused to recognise their authority for a moment. They regarded them as intruders and encroachers upon their own domain, jostled them unceremoniously aside, and, in defiance of the Emperor's orders, forcibly retained all powers of government in their own hands. To put the matter briefly, the French armies in Spain were so much demoralised by indiscipline that they had become a number of independent bands under independent chiefs, who claimed autocratic power within the districts assigned to them, and would not yield it up to the Emperor himself.

It was hardly likely that such men would pay any respect to Joseph; and indeed they treated him with open contempt, not scrupling even to appropriate to the service of their troops a part of the monthly allowance sent by Napoleon for the King's own use. Such an outrage would, it might be thought, have stirred even the mildest man to revolt; but Joseph accepted it, accepted even the official information that Catalonia was taken from him, rather than resign his shadow of a crown. He was unwilling, he said, to increase existing difficulties, and was prepared to stay at Madrid till the Russian war were ended; and a few days later he received his reward in the shape of a March 13. letter to the effect that Jourdan was appointed to be chief of his staff, since the Emperor intended, if he should find himself obliged to go to Poland, to place Joseph in command of all the armies in Spain. The King at once informed Jourdan, who had returned to Madrid in December 1811, of his appointment; and thinking that the time was come for himself to send an ultimatum, he wrote that, if the annexation of Catalonia were openly proclaimed, and if he were not left in supreme

1811. authority, both civil and military, in Spain, he would abdicate his throne. The letter was intercepted and printed in the Spanish newspapers; but Napoleon judged it to be a forgery and took no notice; for he had already on the 18th of March issued the final order that Joseph was to command all the troops in the Peninsula in chief, and that Suchet, Soult, and Marmont were to obey all orders that they might receive from him, "to ensure unity of action on the part of the armies."¹ The wording of the directions to the Generals was a little obscure, for it could be construed as permitting them to disobey any commands from Joseph which, in their judgment, would not contribute towards the result desired by the Emperor; while the omission to mention by name the chiefs of the Armies of Valencia and of the North might be interpreted as exempting them from the duty imposed upon their colleagues of the other armies. On the 3rd of April the Emperor complicated matters still further by declaring first that he gave Marmont a free hand with the Army of Portugal; secondly, that he entrusted to Joseph the supreme command of the Armies of Portugal, Valencia, and the South, the remaining armies being still unmentioned; and thirdly, that he committed likewise to Joseph the political and military direction of all affairs in Spain.² Such contradictory solutions of a difficult problem show that Napoleon felt his embarrassments in Spain to be beyond remedy.

There was, however, still another means of escaping from them. Joseph was once more empowered either to negotiate with the Cortes at Cadiz for the recognition by them of his sovereignty in return for his acceptance of the constitution, which they had lately promulgated, and upon the basis of this arrangement to agree to the restoration of Catalonia and the withdrawal of all French

¹ "Pour faire marcher les armées dans une même direction." The phrase is explained a few lines lower down by the words "la nécessité de mettre de l'ensemble dans les armées." Napoleon to Berthier, 16th March 1812. *Corres.* 18,583.

² *Corres. de Napoléon*, 18,632.

troops from Spain ; or he might summon a Cortes of 1811. his own which should adopt that same constitution with the same results. In this latter case the ground was to be carefully prepared by the Intrusive King ; and it was judged that the chance of getting rid of the British as well as of the French would offer strong temptation to the Spaniards. So sanguine was the Emperor of the success of one or other of these expedients that on the 17th of April he tendered to Castlereagh the following April 17. propositions as the basis of peace. The integrity of Spain and of Portugal was to be guaranteed, and France was to renounce all extension of her boundaries towards the Pyrenees. In Portugal the House of Bragança would continue to reign ; in Spain the dynasty of Joseph would be declared independent, and Spain would be governed by a national constitution of the Cortes. The kingdom of Naples would remain with Murat, and the kingdom of Sicily with the reigning house of Bourbon ; and all forces, both naval and military, of France and Great Britain would be withdrawn alike from the Peninsula and from Sicily. All other subjects of discussion were to be settled upon the principle that each of the contracting powers should keep what the other was powerless to take from her.¹ The bait was tempting ; for such an arrangement would have left England in possession of practically all the French and Dutch colonies ; but Castlereagh refused April 23. to look at it. Within less than a week he answered that England could entertain no overtures which involved the acknowledgment of Joseph in lieu of Ferdinand as King of Spain. Therewith vanished the Emperor's last hope of concluding matters in the Peninsula before he invaded Russia ; of securing his rear in the south and west, as we may put it, before advancing north and east. What his ultimate designs as to Spain may have been, it is impossible to say ; it is only certain that for the time being he left his affairs in that country to chance ; and it should seem that he was guided not a

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, 18,652.

1811. little towards this fatal step by Joseph's childish craving for the phantom of a crown.¹

There was another quarter in which certain recent events promised to react powerfully upon the situation in Spain. In February 1811 the King of Naples, always impecunious, issued a decree for the arbitrary imposition of a tax, which called forth a vigorous protest from the Sicilian nobles upon the just ground that such taxation, unless sanctioned by their representatives in Parliament, was unconstitutional and illegal. The King responded by arresting five gentlemen who had been foremost in remonstrance, and banishing them to a neighbouring islet. This high-handed action was taken on the 21st of July, and Lord William Bentinck arrived on the island on the 24th. He came invested

July 24. with the double charge of Envoy Extraordinary and Commander-in-Chief of the troops ; and his instructions bade him put an end, if it were possible, by firm though conciliatory remonstrance, to the treacherous system pursued by the court of Naples. Some account of this has already been given, but may here be briefly recapitulated. Under the baneful influence of the Queen all respectable Sicilians were excluded from the administration ; partiality was shown towards Neapolitans ; the wishes of the Sicilian Parliament, such as it was, were ignored ; the people were so much estranged by oppression as to threaten a revolution ; and finally the British subsidy was squandered in childish projects for the recovery of Naples, without a thought for concerted operations against the common enemy. Moreover—and this was the really important point—the Sicilians were so much exasperated that they were only held down by British bayonets, and were rapidly inclining to treat the red-coats as their worst enemies instead of as their deliverers ; with the result that a respectable force of British troops was not only locked up and disabled from

¹ The whole episode of Napoleon's dealings with Spain at this time is admirably summarised by M. Masson in *Napoléon et sa Famille*, vii. 238-283.

active operations, but was actually in danger of destruction by a combined movement of the French without and the despairing Sicilians within. Moore had long ago pointed out that with a proper government the island could be held by a trifling garrison, but without such a government could never be considered safe ; and the British Ministry was tardily beginning to realise that he had been right.

The arrest of the five nobles had thrown the whole country into a ferment, which was still seething violently when Bentinck landed. His coming was no secret ; and indeed there was reason to believe that the Court of Palermo, expecting that he would be clothed with drastic powers, had purposely taken their measures so as to meet him at the outset with defiance. The language of King Ferdinand's chief minister confirmed this suspicion, for he treated Bentinck's representations not merely with neglect but with insolence. From insolence the Court proceeded to outrageous seizure and confiscation of peaceable British vessels, as if intent upon irritating the British Government to the utmost ; and in fact after a month of futile parley Bentinck resolved to hasten home without further delay and to seek authority for bringing the wretched government of King Ferdinand to reason, if necessary by force of arms. By the end of August he was on his way ; but not before he had become infected with enthusiasm for a political and military project which had no bearing upon the Sicilian question, but which in view of future events must here be briefly described.

A younger son of the House of Habsburg had about this time conceived the notion of forming a corps of troops in Sardinia as a nucleus about which the whole of the north Italian states should group themselves, in order to shake off, under his leadership, the yoke of France. His representative or traveller (to use a commercial term), a certain Count La Tour, met Bentinck at Palermo on the 28th of August ; and there the great plan was Aug. 28.

1811. unfolded, amended by Lord William's moderating hand and by him set forth on paper. It was sufficiently vague. The entire scheme was to be fathered upon England, nominally because British troops could enter Italy at any point, whereas Austria might be checked on the threshold ; but really beyond doubt because England alone could provide the necessary funds. She then was to form bases in Sicily, where of course she had troops already, and in Sardinia, where some kind of a force was to be in some unexplained fashion collected by the Archduke. To enable him the better to pose as the champion of Italian liberty, he was to seek a daughter of the House of Carignan in marriage, and thus become more or less Italian himself ; and it was urged by Bentinck that such a matrimonial alliance would make the annexation of liberated Italy to Piedmont appear a natural and proper thing. But the Archduke was not to be the true leader of the movement. The British Commander-in-Chief, Bentinck himself, was to choose the time, place, and manner of the great attempt on Italy ; and, as the distribution of the money was to be left to him, his authority could not but be paramount. The entire arrangement betrays signs of rather hasty manipulation by two men of different degrees of ambition. The Archduke, it should seem, hoped to make a great marriage by cutting a great figure, and to cut a great figure by making a great marriage, much as an aspiring host endeavours to tempt two distinguished guests, who would not otherwise approach his table, by inviting each of them to meet the other. Bentinck's was a purer and more exalted aim. He would raise and organise the forces of insurrection that should rally about the young leader ; and, having seen them victorious, would interpose at the last to insist that the new kingdom must enjoy what are called free institutions after the English model. He had the sweet and touching faith of the Whig in popular assemblies (provided always that they are not too popular), and trusted to go down to posterity as the

disinterested hero who had endowed Italy with that 1811. inestimable benefit.¹

It was therefore with feverish eagerness to settle the Sicilian question that he hurried to England and laid his schemes before Lord Wellesley. His suggestions as to Sicily were thorough. The first thing to be done, as he rightly said, was to exclude the Queen —now reduced almost to a state of insanity by profligacy and opium—altogether from the Government, and to form a Sicilian administration supported by a Sicilian army, which latter should be under the orders of the British Commander-in-Chief. To reduce the Court of Naples still further to subjection, a new treaty should be negotiated, under which the number of the British troops in the island should be left unspecified, and the British subsidy should be reduced and vested in the British Commander-in-Chief ; while the Neapolitan Government should be bound after a certain period to supply ten thousand men for external operations within the limits of the Mediterranean. Lastly, since the Court of Naples would doubtless ask for some solid advantage in return for these concessions, England was to pledge herself to do her best to recover Neapolitan territory on the main land of Italy, but only on condition that, in the event of reconquest, the people should receive a free constitution in order to reconcile them to the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty. Pending the settlement of this weighty matter the country was to remain under the sole government, protection, and administration of the King of Great Britain. It is evident from all this that Bentinck was completely possessed by his plans for the regeneration of Italy, and was prepared to sacrifice everything to them. The British Government so far had looked for some work to be done on the east coast of Spain by a contingent of British troops from Sicily ; but Bentinck at this time absolutely lost sight of any such operation. Beyond

¹ F. O. Sicily. Memo. of a conference held at Palermo on 28th Aug., document dated 29th Sept. 1811.

1811. doubt, being an honourable and patriotic man, he advocated that which he thought best for his country and the common cause ; but the project of his choice was not the less welcome to him because it gave him an independent instead of a subordinate military command. However, he in great measure converted the British Government to his views. Wellesley approved the Italian scheme in its broad outlines, though he forbade any efforts to stir up factitious and premature insurrection. The Italian movement must be spontaneous, he wrote, and the first manifestation of it must be left to its leaders on the spot ; otherwise the Government would have none of it. As to Sicily, Bentinck was empowered to suspend payment of the subsidy, if the administration were not improved and the Sicilian army were not placed under his command ; but unless King Ferdinand's Government could be proved guilty of treacherous relations with the French, he was to abstain from acts of hostility. "Even if your mission fails," wrote Wellesley, "we would rather withdraw our troops from Sicily than employ them for forcible measures against the Court of Palermo."¹

Meanwhile General Maitland remained in command at Sicily in the deepest disquietude. The situation was indeed none of the pleasantest. The people had built high hopes on the arrival of Bentinck, who had no sooner come than he had rushed home again. They would have preferred that the English should put an end to the maladministration of the Bourbons ; but, failing the English, they were quite prepared to turn to the French ; and their patience was very nearly exhausted. As to the Sicilian army, it was impossible to say whether it were friendly or the reverse. All that was certain was that the Queen's spies were everywhere, even in the offices of the English commissariat, that the Neapolitan Court was in constant communication with the enemy, and that Murat was steadily assembling troops in Lower Calabria. In November a

¹ F. O. Sicily. Wellesley to Bentinck, 7th, 21st Oct. 1811.

spy, one Cassetti, was detected carrying proposals from 1811. Murat to the Queen of Naples to concert a league against the British, but General Maitland pressed in vain for his trial and punishment; and matters came to a crisis at the beginning of December when a conspiracy was discovered at Messina for seducing the Italian troops in the British service from their allegiance and destroying the British army. A few days later Dec. 7. Bentinck arrived and took matters vigorously in hand. He began by informing the Court at once that the subsidy had been cut off; and, by summoning additional troops from Malta, he showed that he would not be trifled with. He also insisted that Cassetti should be tried by court-martial, stating plainly that if the King were obstructive, he would not only try the prisoner but also execute him without His Majesty's consent. Then turning to the true object of his mission he demanded peremptorily that the administration should be changed, innocent political prisoners released, and the command of the Sicilian army vested in himself. For a moment, after a stormy and unprofitable interview with the Queen, he was on the verge of overthrowing the Government of King Ferdinand by force, but contented himself with the menace of calling up the British troops from Messina to Palermo. The old King, who only asked for a quiet life, thereupon 1812. declared that he would abdicate; and on the 16th of Jan. 16. January 1812, in spite of furious opposition from the Queen, he made over his authority to the Hereditary Prince—the same potentate who many years afterwards was expelled, under the hated name of Bomba, from his dominions.

For the present, however, the new ruler was all concession. He revoked the obnoxious tax imposed by his father, recalled the exiled nobles, and even invited Bentinck to take a seat in the Council of Government, an offer which was gratefully declined. Too easily placated by this show of compliance and by profusion of soft words, Bentinck, in spite of the warnings of the

1812. Sicilians, allowed the payment of the subsidy to begin again, though the Prince as yet showed no sign of changing his Ministers, nor of forbidding further interference by the Queen. However, Lord William judged that the recent changes, by reconciling the Sicilians generally to England, would enable him very shortly to detach a large portion of his force from the island for active operations ; though his ideas as to the sphere where that detachment should be employed were curiously confused. On the 25th of January 1812 he declared that he doubted whether Italy were yet ripe for seconding an army of emancipation, and that therefore it would be well to send such troops as he could spare to the coast of Catalonia. Yet he occupied Lissa with seven hundred men, as an advantageous post for the triple purpose of smuggling British produce into the Continent, of furnishing a naval station in the Adriatic, and of stimulating insurrection upon both shores of that narrow sea. He recommended also the occupation of Elba, and of a fortress or two in Corsica, and drew up a project for the furtherance of his designs in Sardinia. In fact he was very greatly inclined towards a vicious dispersion of his force for vague and visionary objects, hugging always to his heart the prospect of delivering Italy by arms as a soldier, and of establishing her freedom and unity as a statesman. Nevertheless, though desperately anxious to liberate some one somewhere, he was for the present content with his position in Sicily as a mediator, to use his own phrase, between despotism on the one hand and revolution on the other ; a function which, when discharged by a Teuton for Latins, demands a wider range of imagination and a keener sense of the ridiculous than is usually vouchsafed to a sentimental Whig with more prejudices than brains. The great point, however, for our purpose is that his use of his new powers made it possible to release a part of the Sicilian garrison for service in Spain.

But though Napoleon thus endangered his hold both

upon Italians and Spaniards, he had contrived to inspire 1812. a power outside Europe with an ill-will against Britain which might bring about a useful diversion in his favour. Brief notice has already been given from time to time of strained relations between England and the United States, and it will be convenient in this place very shortly to recapitulate the whole story.

American commercial relations with England were regulated by a treaty, known as Jay's treaty, which had been negotiated by Mr. Jay with Grenville in 1794, and had been ratified by Washington and the Senate in 1796. A principal point of difference outstanding at this time between the two nations was that of the right claimed by the British Government to impress British sailors from foreign ships on the high seas ; the Americans contending that such sailors, if naturalised as citizens of the United States, should be as free as natural born subjects of the Republic ; and the British replying with perfect truth that, if this claim were admitted, such advantage would be taken of it by British seamen as to make the manning of the British Navy impossible. As neither party would give way, the matter was left undecided ; and for this, among other reasons, the ratification of the treaty was bitterly opposed in America, most notably by two men, both of them of political prominence and destined to the highest office, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. England had no more bitter enemies west of the Atlantic than this pair ; yet singularly enough both were strongly imbued with the absurd English prejudice against a standing army and due preparation for defence. Madison's theory was that England could always be brought to her knees by commercial restrictions, and that consequently there was no need either for disciplined troops or for a regular navy ; and it will be seen that he had the courage to act upon his opinion.

Speaking generally, during the first half of the great struggle of the French Revolution American sympathy was naturally on the side of the French. Her own

1812. contest with England, her obligation to France for the help, which alone had enabled her to emerge from it with triumph, and the establishment of a French Republic furnished ample reasons for her predilection ; but the excesses of the Jacobins had alienated not a little of this good feeling, which was still further estranged as the war proceeded. French cruisers made damaging depredations upon American commerce ; and the French Government, though in 1800 it restored friendly relations by a convention, declined through sheer lack of funds to pay any indemnity. Moreover, France supported Spain against the United States in the adjustment of the boundaries of Louisiana ; and finally Napoleon established himself as despot and deliberately restored an hereditary aristocracy. Thus American gratitude was extinguished by unfriendly acts, and any sentimental prejudices which she might have retained in favour of the French nation were shocked by these outrages upon good republican principles. A party had even grown up which looked upon England as the sole champion of liberty and property. On the other hand, Jefferson had been elected President in 1801, and had chosen James Madison for his Secretary of State ; while the renewal of the war in 1803 revived all the old troubles as to the rights of neutrals and British encroachment upon them on the sea. Madison's method of dealing with the difficulty was to prohibit the importation of British manufactures ; and accordingly a law to that purport was passed in March 1806, which was to take effect from the middle of the ensuing November. Political opponents pointed out that such a course might lead to war, and that the object was not worth the risk. For it was not the legitimate carrying trade of America which the President sought to protect, but that which under a neutral flag carried the property of belligerents. Such a distinction, however, was not likely to appeal to a race with an inherited instinct of commerce ; and moreover, though Madison himself never dreamed of going to war with

England, there were already some among his supporters 1812. who spoke in debate of the ease with which Canada and Nova Scotia might be conquered by the militia of Vermont and Massachusetts, and of the damage that might be inflicted on British merchant-shipping by American privateers.

Nevertheless, upon the succession of Fox to the Foreign Office, Madison seized the opportunity to send William Pinkney, a man of moderate views, to assist James Monroe, the American Minister in London, in negotiating an amicable settlement of the whole question. Before Pinkney could arrive, the British Government on the 16th of May issued a notification that the coast from the Elbe to Brest was blockaded, with a proviso that neutral vessels engaged in legitimate trade should be excluded only between Ostend and the Seine. To this the American Government took no exception ; and the proceeding formed no bar to the discussion of a treaty. Upon the most important point in dispute—the impressment of seamen from foreign ships—even Fox would not give way ; but, short of actual renunciation of this right, the British Commissioners made every possible concession, while on the great question of the carrying trade likewise they went far to meet the American claims. Pinkney and Monroe, therefore, decided to accept a treaty which embodied these conditions, giving due notice that they did so upon their own responsibility ; and the document was ready for signature when, on the 21st of November, Napoleon issued his counterblast to the British proclamation of the 16th of May—the decree known as the Berlin decree. The British Commissioners then hesitated to sign without assurance that America would resent actively any interference of the French with her trade ; but at length they consented to do so, entering a protest against this decree, and reserving the right to take measures of retaliation. The British Government indeed did retaliate a few weeks later by the Order in Council of the 7th of January 1807. The Berlin

1812. decree had declared the British Isles to be in a state of blockade and all produce of the British Empire to be good prize ; the Order in Council prohibited all trade between any two French ports, but this was only an extension of the blockade ordered in May, to which the Americans had not objected. Both Orders and decree were avowedly measures of hostility directed by belligerent against belligerent ; but there was no reason why the Orders should vitiate the terms of the treaty with the United States.

Jefferson and Madison, however, had resolved, even before the document reached America, that they would not ratify it ; and within three days of its arrival, without submitting it to the Senate as he was constitutionally bound to do, without even referring it to his Cabinet, Jefferson arbitrarily rejected the treaty. The reasons for this action were principally two : first, provincial ignorance and prejudice ; secondly, the need for rallying his party, which was only held together by hatred of England. "Strange," said an American orator, who had no love for Britain, in 1811, "Strange that we should have no objection to any other people, civilised or savage ! The great autocrat of all the Russias receives the homage of our high consideration. The Dey of Algiers and his nest of pirates are a very civil good sort of people with whom we find no difficulty in maintaining relations of peace and amity. Turks, Jews, and Infidels ; Melimeli, prince of Tripoli, or the Little Turtle, chief of the Miamis ; barbarians of every clime and colour are welcome to our arms. With chiefs of banditti, negro or mulatto, we can treat and we can trade. Name, however, but England, and all our antipathies are up in arms against her ; against those whose blood runs in our veins ; those in common with whom we can claim Shakespere and Newton and Chatham for our countrymen . . . whose government is the freest on earth, our own only excepted ; and from whom all the valuable parts even of our own are borrowed. . . ." The words are as true to-day as

they were a century ago. Where England is concerned, American statesmen have only to employ insult, fraud, and unfaithful dealing to be sure of popular applause ; and they have acted and doubtless will continue to act accordingly.

Thus a great opportunity for the reconciliation of England and America was sacrificed. Jefferson did indeed order Monroe and Pinkney to recommence negotiations for an informal understanding on the basis of the rejected treaty, thus showing that in reality he was satisfied with it ; but in April there was an occurrence which greatly embittered the feeling between the two nations. Pursuant to an order from Admiral Berkeley, the King's ship *Leopard* claimed three British deserters from the United States frigate *Chesapeake*, and, on the refusal of the commander to muster his men, fired upon her with great injury to her hull and crew, and carried off the three men by force. This was an indefensible outrage ; and Jefferson lost no time in ordering all British ships of war to leave the waters of the United States, and instructing his Ministers in London to demand redress. Berkeley's own report, however, was the first to reach England ; and on receiving it Canning spontaneously disowned his action, recalled him from his command, and tendered reparation. It is difficult to see what more could have been done ; but Jefferson chose to demand further that the British Government should in future abandon the right to search American vessels for British subjects. Canning naturally refused to mix up a question of such importance with a mere incident which he had disavowed. He appointed a special envoy, Mr. Rose, to proceed to Washington and arrange the details of reparation ; but, while declaring himself ready to listen to suggestions for an adjustment of differences, he declined to renew negotiations upon the basis of a treaty already signed and rejected by one of the parties. Jefferson might find it convenient to conciliate England by stealth for his country's sake, while flouting her

1812. publicly for his own ; but a man who was too cowardly to benefit his fatherland at the risk of his own popularity might well lack the courage, if hard pressed, to fulfil an informal understanding.

Thus distrust and suspicion increased in both parties ; and further events of 1807 made the contention between them even hotter than before. The Peace of Tilsit released the French armies for the enforcement of the Berlin decree ; and the consequences soon made themselves felt. In February 1807 General Armstrong, the American Minister in Paris, received assurance from the French Minister of Marine that the decree would not affect the convention concluded between the United States and France in 1800 ; but in October Champagny, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, gave him to understand that, since the principal Powers had agreed to enforce the decree, America would be expected to do the like, and that the only remedy for her was to declare war against England. Moreover, that there might be no mistake as to Napoleon's intention to coerce the United States into compliance with his system, an American ship with English goods on board, which had been accidentally stranded on the French coast, was seized and confiscated. Almost at the same time England issued her second Order in Council of 17th March 1807, declaring the territories of France and of her Allies to be in a state of blockade, and forbidding all neutral trade with them except through Great Britain. Within five weeks Napoleon retaliated by the Milan decrees of 23rd November and 17th December, proclaiming that all vessels entering French ports from British ports were to be forfeited, and that all such as had paid British dues or submitted to a visit from English officers were denationalised and liable to confiscation on the high seas. Between the rival menaces of the two belligerent powers American carrying trade bade fair to be extinguished.

Upon receiving the news of Champagny's interpretation of the Berlin decree, and before knowledge of

the second Order in Council, the President submitted ^{1812.} to Congress a bill, which was speedily passed, to lay an embargo upon all American vessels bound to foreign countries. This measure was aimed not at France but at England, to whose Empire the greater part of American produce was exported ; and the fact was made manifest by the language of the press, which spoke of the embargo as “a sword not drawn from the scabbard,” and proclaimed that, in the event of hostilities, not an inch of ground on the American Continent must remain British. Jefferson of course had still no idea of going to war ; but Mr. Rose was shortly expected upon the business of the reparation to be given for the misconduct of the *Leopard* ; and the President wished to have a weapon with which, as he fondly hoped, he could bully the British envoy. As to Napoleon’s shameless ill-faith, and the affront, to say nothing of the material injury, which he had put upon the American nation, these were relatively matters of small moment. The arrival of the second Order in Council and of the Milan decrees, therefore, made little change in the situation. Since both England and France prohibited neutral trade, it was open to the United States to side either with the one or the other, or to follow the policy, expressed in the embargo, of withdrawing from that trade altogether, in the hope and expectation that it would cause serious damage to England. Men of insight foresaw that such a course would inevitably lead to war with Great Britain at the last ; and one member from Massachusetts said openly that, since it was necessary to choose between the two belligerents, regard both for commercial interests and for the independence of nations ought to attach the United States to the side of Great Britain. This utterance, we are told, “was received with marked indignation, almost as if there had been something treasonable in it.”¹ What was the independence of nations in comparison with the pleasure of contributing without danger to the overthrow of England ?

¹ Hildreth, *Hist. of the United States*, vi. 54.

1812. At the opening of 1808 Rose arrived in America ; but his instructions bade him confine himself to the affair of the *Leopard* only, and not to approach even that until the proclamation excluding British men-of-war from American waters had been withdrawn. After a hard struggle Madison yielded the first point, but declined to give way on the second. In vain Rose pointed out that this proclamation had been issued in reprisal for an act that had been disavowed, and for which he was come voluntarily to give redress. Madison insisted that it was a mere measure of precaution ; and March. the March negotiations came to an abrupt end. Thereupon the President obtained from Congress an addition of six thousand men to the American army. Such an act seems strange in an administration that abjured all warlike intentions, until it is explained that commissions were distributed broadcast to political supporters, including four or five editors of newspapers. Powers were also taken for calling out one hundred thousand militia ; and nearly a million sterling was appropriated for purposes of defence. An attempt to increase the naval force, however, was less successful. One gentleman from South Carolina declared that he could not find words to express his abhorrence of the navy, and that he would go a great deal further to see it burned than to extinguish the fire. In subservience to such prejudices as this the bill was lost.

This occurrence marked the beginning of divisions, which were presently to become acute, in the American people. Among all nations, and particularly in new countries, there is an instinctive antagonism between the agricultural and the commercial population ; between, it may be said, the dwellers in towns and the dwellers in the country. In the United States this feeling was particularly strong. Even Franklin had declared with his usual shrewd sense that trading is mostly cheating ; while comparatively few had realised that commerce and agriculture are mutually interdependent. The shipping interest was almost entirely

in the hands of the northern, and especially of the New England, states, which were distinguished by the enterprise of their merchants, the good quality of their ship-building, and the excellence of their seamen. To these communities the embargo was naturally hateful. It was intolerable to them to see their vessels rotting at the wharves, their money slipping from their pockets, their busy havens paralysed by idleness and distress. They soon contrived a hundred methods of evading the detested order ; and not all the ingenuity of the President, aided by some of his newly-raised troops, could avail to enforce it. As to its effect upon the belligerent powers, Napoleon, after declaring his unqualified approval of it and his admiration for the spirit of the nation that renounced trade altogether rather than submit to English tyranny, ordered the seizure and confiscation of all American vessels in French ports.¹ General Armstrong of course remonstrated with indignant amazement, but was answered with delightful humour that the Emperor was helping to execute the American law ; for, if the embargo were genuine, these vessels could not be American, and must therefore be denationalised and subject to forfeiture. The British Government, on the other hand, encouraged evasion of the embargo by ordering their cruisers to spare such American vessels as offended only by lacking regular clearances. Pinkney, under instructions from his Government, offered the British Ministry the repeal of the embargo in return for the cancelling of the Orders in Council. Canning retorted to the effect that he would be very happy to do anything in his power to release the American people from the very inconvenient restriction by which they had fettered themselves, but that the Orders in Council were directed against France and not against the United States, and could not therefore be withdrawn in exchange for an American concession. Incidentally he remarked that the present experiment was valuable as showing that Great Britain was not so absolutely de-

¹ *Corres. de Napoléon*, No. 13,753, Bayonne, 17th April 1808.

1812. pendent on American trade as to be obliged to petition for commercial intercourse. In fact the withdrawal of the Americans from the carrying traffic was an utter failure, so far as coercion of the belligerents was concerned ; while American merchants reckoned—and the future proved their reckoning to be correct—that the commerce still left to them under the British Orders was not less extensive, and far more profitable, than was to be expected under a general peace. The discontent therefore increased formidably in the New England States, where the Governor of Connecticut went so far as to speak of the duty of the State Legislatures to save the liberties of the people from the tyranny of the Central Government. This was only one of many symptoms that, rather than submit much longer to the embargo, these States would secede from the Union.

It was perfectly clear that the obnoxious measure must be abandoned ; and accordingly early in 1809 it was repealed. The repeal was to begin, in the case of England and France, at the end of the next session of Congress, and for other countries on the 15th of March ; and all imports from France and England were prohibited from the 20th of May onwards. But this enactment was intended only to please the eye. Madison had succeeded to the Presidency in March 1809 ; and, since he had fresh hopes of coming to an understanding with England, he had obtained authority to revoke at will the provisions for excluding British ships and goods from American waters. Canning on his side raised no objection to the reopening of negotiations, which were entrusted to the British Minister at Washington, Mr. David Erskine, the young and ambitious son of the eminent advocate. Canning had defined very clearly the terms upon which he would repeal the Order in Council, and had authorised Erskine to give a copy of the despatch, which embodied them, to the American Government. This, either from zeal or from conceit, Erskine did not do, though he duly communicated Canning's conditions ; and the upshot of the matter

was that he accepted an agreement which not only 1812. violated his chief's direct commands, but also contained an extremely unmannerly reflection upon the British Cabinet. Madison, greatly relieved, thereupon proclaimed the removal of the embargo and restoration of commercial intercourse with England ; and the American merchants rejoicing sent off their ships in hundreds to foreign ports.

Their exultation unluckily was premature. Canning declined to ratify the treaty, and recalled Erskine in disgrace ; upon which as a natural consequence the exclusion of British merchant vessels and British goods from American ports was renewed. Some writers have urged that Canning was wrong in rejecting Erskine's settlement, because at least it placed the United States in hostility with France, and that his evident distrust of the American Government was unjustified. It is to be feared that this contention cannot be upheld. Madison's purpose may well have been honourable enough ; but his moral courage so little corresponded to it that, even before Canning's disallowance of the treaty was known, he readmitted French ships to American waters in direct contravention of its terms. If he yielded thus much to the blustering protests of the French Minister at Washington, it is hardly likely that he would have offered very strenuous resistance to direct remonstrances from Napoleon. Moreover he gave almost immediately another example of equivocal behaviour.

In October Mr. Frederick Jackson, whom we last saw at Copenhagen, arrived at Washington with authority to treat upon the same conditions as had been tendered by Erskine. In the meantime, Erskine's correspondence had been printed and laid before the British Parliament ; and Madison and his Secretary of State were dismayed to remark in their own letters to him a revelation of pacific sentiments, which were likely to be highly unpleasing to their supporters. In order, therefore, to show how little they valued a good understanding with England, they picked a quarrel at once

1811. with Jackson, and succeeded in driving him home after no more than a month's stay. The part of Mr. Facing-both-ways is not always an easy one to play ; and it cannot be said that Madison's interpretation of it was artistic.

The disruption of the British Cabinet owing to the quarrel between Castlereagh and Canning encouraged the President once more to try his fortune in negotiation, for he reckoned that the increased strength of the Opposition in the British Parliament might force the new Ministry to grant easier terms. Throughout this time Napoleon had treated the American Republic with studied insolence and contempt, seizing her ships right and left, and telling her that she had only herself to thank for it ;¹ but in January 1810 he inclined to a better understanding with the States, though he still told Armstrong that the only condition upon which he would revoke the Berlin decree was that England should repeal her original order of blockade of May 1806.² Armed with this definite statement, Pinkney, by Madison's instruction, approached Lord Wellesley to obtain this preliminary concession from England. Wellesley naturally showed no great eagerness to oblige him ; and the negotiation digressed into an unprofitable controversy over the subject of blockades that exist only on paper. Nevertheless England favoured the importation of American produce into the British Isles ; and, between forged papers and special licences issued by the British Government, American exports to Europe had risen practically to their normal volume. To all intent, therefore, the United States were asking England to abstain from injuring France, her deadly enemy, in order to save themselves from the expense of keeping a navy ; for it is clear that the Orders in Council would have done the States little harm had not Napoleon made them a pretext for arbitrary depredations upon American commerce. The astute Emperor asked for nothing better

¹ See, for instance, *Corres. de Napoléon*, 15,227.

² *Corres. de Napoléon*, 16,127, 16,168.

than this, and, in order to drive the two English-speaking nations to hostilities, became more and more wanton in his violence. He seized large numbers of American vessels in Spain, Holland, Naples, and the Baltic, and answered all complaints with the reply that he was justified in so doing by the failure of the American Government to protect itself against the aggression of England. Leaving Armstrong to digest these unpalatable arguments for a few weeks, he informed him in March that the confiscated vessels would be sold; and, when the unhappy Minister at last lost patience and gave full rein to his indignation, the Emperor calmly put up one hundred American ships with their cargoes for sale, and poured the proceeds, amounting to about one million and a half sterling, into the French sinking fund.

A false move of the American Government now gave Napoleon the opportunity of placing it in a more difficult position than ever. At the beginning of May Congress passed an act removing the prohibition of imports both from France and England, but giving the President authority, if either of these Powers should cancel her obnoxious edicts, to revive the prohibition against the other unless she did likewise. On hearing of this Napoleon published in the *Moniteur* a patronising letter of approval from his Foreign Minister to Armstrong, in which he undertook to revoke the decrees of Berlin and Milan from the 1st of November ensuing, upon the understanding that either the British should repeal their Orders in Council and renounce their new doctrine of blockade, or that the American President should put in force against England the powers conferred upon him by this Act of Congress. Armstrong at once communicated this to Pinkney, who thereupon called on the British Government to cancel their Orders. Wellesley replied that the revocation of the decrees was prospective and conditional; but that, as soon as it should have taken effect, the Orders in Council should be at once

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1810. rescinded. Madison, however, forgetting all the outrageous conduct of France in the joyful prospect of bullying England without danger, proclaimed that the decrees had been absolutely recalled, and ordered that French men-of-war should be admitted to American Nov. ports, British men-of-war being still excluded. This proclamation was not only false but foolish, for Napoleon showed signs, not of relaxing, but rather of increasing, the rigour of the Continental System, and continued to seize American vessels as before, only promising that, if the Orders in Council were cancelled, the ships 1811. should be released. But Madison, thoroughly befooled March. by Napoleon's specious undertakings, sent down to Congress a bill, which was passed by violent and irregular methods, for prohibiting all imports from the British Empire unless the Orders were either cancelled or so modified as no longer to injure the commerce of the United States.

By this measure Madison no doubt hoped to coerce England into submission. He was egregiously mistaken. Lord Wellesley still persisted with perfect correctness in his contention that the French decrees had not been really revoked, adding that, even if they had been, the United States were not justified in reviving their hostile enactments against British trade; and finally he refused even to discuss the abstract question as to the British right of blockade. Pinkney therefore quitted England, leaving a junior member of his staff in charge of the American legation; to which Wellesley responded by sending a new Minister, Mr. Foster, to represent England at Washington. Foster had not long taken up this appointment before a fresh incident occurred to embitter the relations between the two countries. The American frigate *President*, for no particular reason, attacked the British ship *Little Belt* of greatly inferior strength off the American coast, reduced her to a wreck, and, after ascertaining her name and quality, stood off. Beyond doubt this was retaliation on the part of the American

navy for the like aggression committed by the King's ship *Leopard*; and Foster, recognising that it was in the circumstances excusable, took no very serious notice of the matter. The new envoy also finally closed the question of the reparation to be made on account of that same affair of the *Leopard*; but on the other hand he would not give way in the matter of Napoleon's decrees. It was, in fact, unsafe for American vessels to trade with France except by special licences, which were openly advertised and sold at a heavy premium in American ports; and moreover Napoleon refused all compensation to the United States for the vessels that he had seized in virtue of his edicts. It was therefore evident to all but the credulous politicians at Washington that the Emperor had made no concession. Indeed when the American Minister at Paris pressed, in May 1812, for documentary evidence of the repeal of the decrees of Berlin and Milan, nothing could be produced except an order dated the 28th of April 1811, which declared that, in consideration of the resistance of the United States to the Orders in Council by their Act of March 1811, the decrees aforesaid were to be considered as inapplicable to American vessels from the 1st of November 1810. The situation thus revealed was delightful. President Madison had proclaimed the revocation of the decrees in November 1810, and on the strength of that presumed revocation had readmitted French vessels to American ports and renewed the exclusion of British vessels. It now appeared that the decrees had remained in force for some time after both of these American concessions to France, and had only been withdrawn in return for them. As a matter of fact they had never been withdrawn at all; for the order of the 28th of April 1811 had obviously been hastily prepared for the occasion, and was in plain words a forgery. Though American diplomacy had perhaps less experience of forged documents in those days than it has in these, it is incredible that its agents can have been deceived in this instance. Nevertheless

1811. this precious document was gravely forwarded to the Foreign Office in London, where it remains to avouch the depth of humiliation to which an American Government will submit for the chance of injuring England without suffering damage in return.

Napoleon meanwhile was now rapidly gaining his point. His commercial restrictions had aggrieved, among other inhabitants of the world, the North American Indians ; the price of furs having fallen so low that they could obtain little in exchange for them. Their discontent brought to the front among certain of the north-western tribes a warrior-prophet named Tecumseh, who denounced all innovations introduced by his white neighbours of the United States, and set himself to collect a following. Being a brave and practical man, he trained his disciples assiduously in military exercises. The American authorities on the spot quickly took the alarm. A dispute about land—most fertile of all sources of quarrel with native tribes—increased the irritation on both sides ; and the climax came in November 1811, when Tecumseh and his people attacked an American force of about eight hundred men, and were not repulsed until they had killed and wounded nearly two hundred of their opponents. This trouble with the Indians was ascribed, as was natural in times of tension, to the intrigues of the British ; and the political party which was in favour of war had by this time gained the upper hand at Washington. Madison, it appears, still hoped to cow Great Britain without actual fighting ; but he was no longer free to work his own will. In December 1811 and in the first two months of 1812 Acts were passed at Washington for raising twenty-five thousand regular troops and fifty thousand volunteers ; and there was big talk, as there had been ever since 1809, of an easy conquest of Canada. It was not that the American nation was united in desiring war : on the contrary the Northern and Southern states were more sharply divided than ever upon the question, the districts

nearest to the Canadian frontier being strongly adverse 1811. to hostilities, and those remotest from it ardent in urging them forward. One orator gave eloquent warning against the perils of going to war with a light heart. "This Canadian campaign," he said, "it seems, is to be a holiday matter. There is to be no expense of blood or treasure on our part. Canada is to conquer herself—is to be subdued by the principle of French fraternity! We are to succeed by the French method! Our whole policy is French! But how dreadfully might not this sort of warfare be retorted on our own Southern states." He spoke to deaf ears. Old prejudices had been stirred to make the hot-heads eager for a fight; strong atavism forbade them to make real military preparations.

Thus Napoleon after years of endeavour at last succeeded in persuading the United States to draw the sword against England. That the Americans had a grievance there can be no question. The British restrictions upon neutral commerce were undoubtedly vexatious and even arrogant, but the use of such weapons was forced upon England by Napoleon; and even so the Americans, in consequence of the war, drove a much greater trade than ever before, or indeed for some years after, in time of peace. We wanted their goods and they wanted ours; and both parties contrived that in spite of all obstructions there should be a steady volume of exchange. There was, therefore, on this head no very serious cause of complaint. In the matter of impressment the Americans stood on firmer ground. Many captains of British men-of-war were undoubtedly arbitrary, overbearing and indiscriminate in laying violent hands on any seaman whom they could, by any pretext, claim to be a British subject. It is said that over one thousand genuine American sailors were serving under durance in King George's ships; and no nation exists that would not rightly resent such an outrage. But on the other hand the Americans had been very unscrupulous in carrying off deserters from the British fleet and army,

1811. and, moreover, the British Government had no means of manning the fleet but by impressment. To have proclaimed that British seamen on board American ships were exempt from it would have signified neither more nor less than the abjuration of British supremacy at sea, or in plain words suicide. When the two nations changed places as neutral and belligerent fifty years later, each learned a good deal of the other's standpoint which had not been realised before. The differences between them a century ago might have been peaceably adjusted, indeed had actually been adjusted, when Jefferson—whether from supreme ignorance or for ephemeral political ends is immaterial—wantonly threw the settlement aside. He, who professed to hold war in abhorrence, is the man who must be held really accountable for the final resort to arms.

As to his successor, one can only speak with a certain compassion, for no man ever cut a more contemptible figure. Napoleon found that the confiscation of American ships and cargoes was at once lucrative to his treasury and injurious to his enemies the British, and had no idea of abstaining from so profitable a practice. When the Americans angrily protested, he told them that they must fight the English, and continued to confiscate ; when the Americans meekly represented that they were ready to fight the English, he informed them that they were quite right, and continued to confiscate. He knew that, if the United States declared war against France, they could do little to hurt her ; for the British had already captured all her colonies and swept her ships from the seas ; and he did not therefore greatly care what part the Americans might choose. If they kept their ships at home, British trade would suffer ; if they sent them to Europe, his coffers would be enriched. But if he could persuade Madison that the British Government was responsible for the seizure of American vessels by the French authorities, and thus turn the wrath of the Republic against that arbitrary tyrant, George the

Third, then assuredly solid advantage would be gained. 1811. Napoleon can hardly have expected that so absurd a contention would find acceptance with any man who claimed the name of statesman, unless it were backed by an imposing display of force. Even a Godoy could hardly have ventured to submit to it except under menace of immediate invasion. Yet Madison proved himself to be even more servile than Godoy ; and his attitude, when not attributable to sheer provincial ignorance, was due entirely to lack of moral courage. To take sides against England was, in his opinion, to take the line of least resistance. He could always rally his party by appealing to the national antipathy against Great Britain : no such miracle was to be worked by a challenge to France. He could reap no advantage from an attack on France : he might annex Canada, and secure a second term as President by making war on England. French injury to the national welfare ; French affronts to the national honour ; the menace to the national safety if France should supplant England as mistress of the seas,—these things lay outside the range of his vision and the sensibility of his conscience. But he had tried the favourite resource of American politicians, provocation of England, once too often ; and it was a just punishment for his weakness and self-seeking that he bound himself to Napoleon's fortunes just as they sank into final disaster, and involved himself and his country in the ruin of Napoleon's fall.

CHAPTER X

1811. RETURNING now to the scene of active operations, let us deal first with events in the south of Spain. Here Soult, looking to the uniform success of Suchet's campaign, had conceived the idea of joining him in the sieges of Cartagena and Alicante, and of establishing himself so firmly in Andalusia as to make it a regular base for offensive movements against Estremadura and Portugal. But to accomplish this it was necessary first to cut short the career of Ballesteros, who had already done much mischief. It was, however, difficult if not impossible to crush this chief so long as he could find refuge not only at Cadiz but at Tarifa and Gibraltar, could put to sea at any one of these ports when hard pressed, and land again at a fresh point to swoop down anew upon the French posts and communications about Cadiz. The Marshal therefore decided first to attack Tarifa, primarily because it gave the British complete mastery of the Straits of Gibraltar, and secondly because it was the one place of the three where he might hope for some success. He was the more inclined to this course inasmuch as he had sent a mission to Barbary, and had obtained from its ruler a promise that the supplies hitherto sent to the Allies would in future be directed to the French, if Tarifa were occupied by them as a port of entry. This promise, it may be added, was not fulfilled; for Mr. Stuart, by sending a counter-mission, armed with richer presents, to the same potentate, quickly persuaded him to confine his good offices, as heretofore, to the British. Soult, nevertheless, resolved to pursue his

design ; and to that end ordered a small siege-train 1811. of twelve pieces with over one hundred waggons of ammunition and siege-equipment to be secretly collected at Puerto Real, just outside Cadiz, in the first days of November. The force appointed for the operations numbered something over twelve thousand men, drawn from the First and Fourth Corps, and was placed under the command of Marshal Victor.¹

The first requisite was to fend off any attempt by Ballesteros, who was in the neighbourhood of Ximena, to interrupt the siege ; and Soult appears to have planned his operations with some hope not only of fending him off but of annihilating him. For on the 21st of November the division of Barrois, thirty-six Nov. 21. hundred men, moved southward from Ronda upon Los Barrios and San Roque, while Pécheux's brigade of the Fourth Corps occupied the passes which lead from the westward into the plain of Gibraltar ; and Leval, with a third force of about the same strength as that of Barrois, closed in upon the Spanish General from Malaga. With some difficulty Ballesteros again found safety under the guns of Gibraltar, where for the present Nov. 27.

¹ *First Division.* Barrois.

1st Corps	1st brigade : 43rd Line, 7th and 9th Poles, about	3,000
	Cavalry brigade . { 16th Dragoons, 500 21st " (det.) 85 } .	585
	Divisional artillery (say)	50

Second Division. Leval.

4th Corps	1st brigade, { 16th Light, 3 batts. Pécheux { 94th Line, 1 batt.	
	2nd brigade, { 51st " 2 batts. Chasseraux { 95th " 1 batt.	. about 6,000
	3rd brigade, { 54th " 2 batts. Cassagne { 27th Light, 1 batt.	
	Divisional Artillery (say)	50
	Artillery and Engineers	765

Covering Force.

3 batts. of 8th and 63rd Line (say)	.	.	1,800
2 squadrons 2nd Dragoons ,	.	.	150
			12,400

1811. his army remained, without shelter from the winter rains and without any food but that supplied by the Governor.

Victor, having left Cadiz a few days later with three battalions and two squadrons, reached Vejer, midway between Cadiz and Tarifa, on the 2nd of December, Dec. 8. and being there joined on the 8th by the siege-train, resumed his march on the next day. Little progress Dec. 9. was made on the 9th owing to bad weather; and in the night the rain came down in torrents, continued for forty-eight hours, and laid the whole country under water. Leval's division had already joined Pécheux, but that of Barrois at San Roque and Los Barrios was completely cut off by the floods both from Cadiz and Malaga; and it was only at great peril of drowning that an officer succeeded in carrying to Barrois the order to unite his division to the rest of the army. Dec. 13. Not until the morning of the 13th could he do so; and meanwhile the whole of the French force had fasted for two days in a desert of mud and water. With great difficulty supplies were brought up from Cadiz, the whole of the horses of the transport, besides those of the field-artillery of the First Corps, having been already Dec. 14. taken to drag the siege-train. On the 14th the march was resumed, and, by dint of harnessing forty or fifty animals to each gun, the train with infinite trouble was brought forward about fifteen miles in five days. Meanwhile on the 17th Ballesteros, in combination with some Spanish troops of the garrison of Tarifa, made an attack on the French outposts, but was beaten Dec. 19. off with loss; and on the 19th Victor's soldiers Dec. 22. debouched into the plain of Tarifa. On the 22nd the train, having braved the fire of a small British squadron at one point of the road, was safely brought in, and the work of the siege began.

Tarifa, then a little town of three thousand inhabitants, lies nearly at the point of a promontory which juts out almost at a right angle to the sea, and is connected by a causeway about five hundred yards long

with a circular island of some seven hundred yards diameter. The town itself stood within an old rampart about six feet thick, surmounted by a crenellated battlement and flanked at intervals by towers; but there was no ditch within the rampart, and the extent of the entire *enceinte*, which was nearly square in form, did not measure more than four hundred yards from north to south and rather less from east to west. The southern front, being within one hundred yards of the sea, was of course practically inaccessible to an army which had no ships to support it; and the British men-of-war were able to afford efficient defence also to the western front, though this was already protected by two important works ashore. These were the castle and tower of the Guzmans at the south-western angle, and a battery mounting one heavy gun upon a sandhill, called Santa Catalina, on the foreshore about three hundred yards south-west of it. These two strongholds commanded all the ground between the walls and the island, which last, being surrounded by sheer cliffs and having a battery constructed at the head of the causeway, was to all intents inaccessible. The northern and eastern sides were far more vulnerable, being dominated at close range by heights from which the town could be seen to its foundations. On the northern front the demolition of a suburb and the conversion of a convent, about a hundred yards from the wall, into an outwork, had done something to increase the strength of the defences; but on the eastern side there were not only ridges which offered good sites for hostile batteries, but additional danger from a hollow way, formed by the bed of a torrent, which ran actually to the foot of the rampart and passed through the town. This last was barred at its entrance by a tower, known as the Retiro, with a portcullis, before which was a line of palisades; but even so it furnished such good cover for an assaulting party as positively to invite an attack.

The engineer in charge of the place, Captain Smith, had noted all these peculiarities, and divining that the

1811. French would almost certainly attempt to make their Dec. breach by the portcullis, had retrenched the position with consummate skill. In the first place the guns of the Retiro tower swept the whole length of the torrent; and, to gain a flanking as well as a frontal fire, he fortified and loopholed the houses and barricaded the streets on each side of the torrent's bed so as to confine the enemy to it. At the same time he provided means of egress to the rear, so that the defenders, if hard pressed, could retreat to the strongest part of the fortifications —Guzman's castle and tower on the southern side—and thence make their way over the causeway to the island. The full strength of the garrison was slightly over three thousand of all ranks,¹ nearly eighteen hundred of whom were British and the remainder Spaniards, the former being under command of Colonel Skerrett of the Forty-seventh, and the whole under command of the Spanish General Copons. Of the British, about eleven hundred were in the tower, one hundred were in the convent, fifty at Santa Catalina, and some six hundred, under Major King of the Eighty-second, on the island. Eleven guns in all were mounted on the walls, towers, and outworks of the fortress, and twelve on the island.

The operations opened with two little sallies on the Dec. 21, 21st and 22nd, in the latter of which the French lost

	Officers.	Men.
Infantry . . .	67	1073
Artillery . . .	5	101
Sappers . . .	4	79
Cavalry . . .	1	16
	—	—
	77	1269 (Arteche, xi. 521, table.)

over twenty killed and wounded, including four officers; 1811. and on the 23rd the French broke ground, as Smith Dec. 23. had expected, on the eastern heights upon both sides of the torrent, at a distance of about three hundred yards from the wall. Before dawn they had completed their first and begun their second parallel, and on the five following nights they pushed their works forward vigorously under a heavy fire from the defenders. And now there ensued a curious complication which might easily have brought disaster not only to this but to any military enterprise. The idea of holding Tarifa had originated not with Wellington nor with General Cooke, his deputy at Cadiz, but solely with General Campbell, the Governor of Gibraltar. Skerrett's brigade was under the command of Cooke, but the artillery, engineers, and part of his infantry had been lent by Campbell. Realising the weakness of the place when the French attacked it by the regular operations of a siege, and unable, perhaps, to appreciate the subtlety of Smith's plan of defence, Skerrett had hesitated to take responsibility by risking his troops in the venture, and had applied to Cooke for orders. On the 24th Cooke's Dec. 24. answer came that the brigade was to be at once re-embarked for Cadiz; and on that night Skerrett held a council of war wherein opinions were divided between Cooke's party, represented by Skerrett, and Campbell's party, represented by Major King and Captain Smith. Gough of the Eighty-seventh, though his regiment belonged to Cadiz, appears to have carried the decision of the council against Skerrett; and it was resolved that resistance should be continued.

On the 26th the wind blew so hard that the British Dec. 26. squadron was obliged to seek shelter in Algeciras Bay; and a deluge of rain poured down for another forty-eight hours, filling the trenches with mud and water. However, with great difficulty and labour the French dragged their guns into the batteries on the night of the 28th, and at eleven o'clock on the following morning Dec. 28. opened fire from ten heavy pieces upon the town Dec. 29.

1811. and the island. The garrison answered with a cannonade Dec. 29. from the towers and from four small vessels, which had returned to the roadstead in spite of persistent bad weather. In a few hours a practicable breach had been made in the spot where Smith had anticipated, just to south of the Retiro Tower ; and now once more Skerrett's heart misgave him, and he decided to withdraw his brigade and abandon the place. He even went so far as to order the garrison's single heavy gun, which was mounted on Guzman's tower, to be spiked. Major King, however, reported this determination to General Campbell, who took effective measures to neutralise it by ordering the transports to return from Tarifa to Gibraltar without taking a man on board. Campbell had just faith in the ability of Smith, who had indeed been indefatigable in making good all damage wrought by the enemy's cannon. Owing to the slope of the ground towards the torrent, the level of the street at the damaged point was thirteen feet below that of the rampart ; but, although the enemy poured showers of grape into the breach, the defenders contrived to keep it clear of rubbish, and to cover the space within with iron gratings, torn from the windows of the houses, with every alternate bar broken and turned upwards.

Dec. 30. At daybreak the French renewed their fire under a sharp fusillade from the marksmen of the garrison ; and at noon the breach was thirty feet wide. Leval, who was in charge of the siege, then sent in a summons, which was rejected. The cannonade began again ; and by nightfall the breach had been enlarged to a width of sixty feet. Leval therefore ordered the assault to be delivered at dawn of the next day.

In truth he had no choice but to storm or raise the siege. Incessant rain forbade any further work upon the trenches, and cut off all communication with Victor's magazines at Vejer. The besiegers were in a miserable state ; their trenches flooded ; their camp a sea of mud. They had neither shelter, nor food, nor fuel to dry

their clothes ; many had succumbed to sickness, and 1811. all were utterly wretched. Soon after sunset of the Dec. 30. 30th the rain streamed down with unusual violence ; the bed of the torrent became a torrent indeed, and washed down such an accumulation of corpses, gabions, planks, and other material from the besiegers' camp that the palisades before the portcullis were swept away, and the portcullis itself was so much bent as to leave an opening into the town. Many of the defensive works were also ruined ; and only by the utmost exertions were the necessary repairs effected before daylight. Fortunately the enemy had suffered even more from the weather than had the Allies ; and it was not until eight o'clock, Dec. 31. when the rain was still falling in sheets, that the French columns were seen to be moving. They were composed of the grenadiers and voltigeurs of the besieging army, sixteen companies of each, massed into four battalions and numbering perhaps two thousand men. The grenadiers formed the actual storming party, while the voltigeurs, supported by Cassagne's brigade, made a demonstration on the right of the allied line, and Pécheux's brigade a similar demonstration on the left. The grenadiers advanced along the right bank of the hollow formed by the bed of the torrent, where they should have been sheltered almost to the last moment from fire ; but, mistaking their way, they followed this direction straight to the portcullis, instead of turning to their right towards the breach. Thus they came under a terrific fusillade from the Eighty-seventh, who defended the breach and the eastern wall. The leader of the storming party fell desperately wounded, and handed his sword through the bars of the portcullis to Gough ; and the men, not knowing what to do, extended themselves, knee-deep in mud, to left and right along the ramparts, and opened a feeble fire. In this way some of them came upon the breach, and a few ascended it ; but all who exposed themselves were instantly shot down, while a raking blast of grape from the north-eastern tower so devastated the attacking party

1811. that they shrank back into the shelter of the hollow, and returned beaten to their camp.

Their loss amounted to two hundred and seven, of whom forty-eight were killed ; and no fewer than seven officers and eighty-one men of the fallen belonged to two gallant companies of the 51st. That of the Allies did not exceed thirty-six, more than two-thirds of whom belonged to the Eighty-seventh. Yet such a check would never have daunted French soldiers but for the appalling state of their camps and their works. The trenches were waist-deep in water ; the platforms of the guns were washed away ; the guns themselves were sinking into the soil ; the ammunition both for cannon and muskets was ruined ; and the muskets themselves were unserviceable. The men were bare-footed and their clothing in rags ; they could get no sleep in their flooded quarters ; they had been obliged to travel eight miles to discover fuel, which after all proved useless when found, owing to the rain ; all supplies were now cut off by swollen torrents, and for four days they had received only quarter-rations of bread. For some time they had suffered such hardships with patience, but they had now reached the limit of human

1812. endurance. Hundreds had already succumbed to fever,
Jan. 1. and on the day after the assault the guards deserted their posts, leaving the trenches to take care of themselves, and scattered all over the country in the vain hope of finding some kind of shelter. At length

Jan. 2. towards the evening of the 2nd of January 1812 the deluge abated, and the weather improved. The French gunners returned to their pieces, but one of them jumping on the embrasure of the breaching battery sank waist-deep into the mud, and could only be extricated by rough methods which left him half dead. On the night of the 2nd the besiegers fired a few shot from their cannon, and Victor gave orders for a new attack which should batter a breach in a different position. Leval protested against this attempt, alleging that the men were worn out, the tools buried in the mud, and

most of the transport-animals dead; but Victor per- 1812. sisted, saying that a week's fine weather would deliver Tarifa into his hands. The arrival of provisions and a belated opportunity of drying their clothes cheered the men back to their work; but on the night of the 3rd the rain began again; all communications Jan. 3. were once more cut off; and Victor, fully alive to his critical position, hesitated no longer to raise the siege.

All through the day of the 4th the storm continued Jan. 4. to rage, and in the evening an English felucca from Tangier was driven ashore at Tarifa. The crew were saved; but the French soldiers, in spite of the fire from the walls, swarmed down to pick up the shattered timbers for fuel, and to take such food as they could find from the wreck. Throughout the night they laboured to bring off the guns; but, though over two hundred men worked their hardest, they could save only three of the light pieces, which were dragged, each by a team of forty horses, to Torre Peña. On their return the horses drew off a field-smithy and two waggon-loads of wounded; and it was then necessary to abandon the rest of the cannon together with the whole of the ammunition, and to collect the waggons and stores in piles to be burned. Finally at three in the morning of the 5th the retreat began, covered by Jan. 5. Barrois's division. The garrison made a sortie and saved many of the stores from the flames, but the pursuit was not pressed, and, though there was some firing, the losses of the French were insignificant. On the 6th with the help of one hundred horses, which had Jan. 6. been sent with guns and ammunition to Tahibilla, eight miles from Tarifa, the wounded and two of the siege-pieces were taken back to Vejer, but the third gun and the newly-arrived loads of ammunition were engulfed with all their teams in the quagmires of the road. Altogether the expedition cost the French over five hundred men, at least three hundred horses and mules, nine guns, and a great quantity of stores. The loss of

1812 the British in the entire siege did not reach the number of seventy killed, wounded, and missing.

Taken as a whole the defence of Tarifa was creditable to the British, though it seems a ridiculous exaggeration to call it, as Napier does, a splendid achievement. The repulse of the assault, as it happened, was simply child's play, for the storming party could hardly move in the sea of mud over which they had to advance. That the place was worth holding, if it could be maintained without undue risk, may be admitted ; and all praise is due to Captain Smith for perceiving, as he did, the possibilities of a long and stout defence. But, after all, it is very evident that the weather was chiefly responsible for the failure of the French attack ; and indeed it was within Smith's calculations that the garrison might at any time be driven into the island. Suppose that it had been driven into the island, and that then there had supervened such a burst of stormy weather as prevailed throughout the siege, with a continuous downpour of rain and a wind which drove the ships to some safer harbour. There was no shelter whatever on the island ; the troops would have perished of wet and cold ; and, as the only place of embarkation was within five hundred yards of Santa Catalina, it is difficult to believe that the French would not have contrived somehow to move a howitzer or two to that hill, from whence they could have made things very unpleasant both for the garrison and for the shipping. Indeed an officer, strongly prejudiced in favour of holding Tarifa, pronounced the island to be untenable with the enemy in possession of the neighbouring heights.

The behaviour of Campbell must not be allowed to pass unnoticed. It was he who had originally occupied Tarifa in 1809, and he claimed it to be a dependency of Gibraltar. The defence was in fact his doing, and was only made possible by his usurpation of command over part of the troops in Cadiz. Those troops were under the orders of Cooke ; and he in his turn was

under the orders of Wellington, to whom Cooke of 1812. course reported all the circumstances, not omitting to point out that he had recalled Skerrett and his brigade from Tarifa, but that his directions had been frustrated by Skerrett's subordinates, acting under the influence and inspiration of Campbell. Wellington treated the matter, which contained abundant material for controversy, with his ordinary strong good sense. First and foremost he entirely upheld the propriety of Cooke's order of recall. "We have a right," he said, "to expect that His Majesty's officers and troops will do their duty upon every occasion ; but we have no right to expect that comparatively a small number would be able to hold the town of Tarifa, commanded as it is at short distances, and enfiladed in every direction, and unprovided with artillery and with walls scarcely cannon-proof." But he declined absolutely to be drawn into a quarrel with Campbell. The incident was over and brilliantly over ; and if Campbell chose to conceive of Tarifa as under his orders (in Wellington's contemptuous phrase) he was very welcome to do so, for the place was really of no importance at the stage which the war had reached. Of course this was not Campbell's view, and one of his officers went so far as to say that "if Soult had once become possessor of Tarifa, the entire coast of Andalusia would soon have come over to King Joseph, and the struggle in the south of Spain would have been over." This is flat nonsense. Wellington with his usual acuteness pointed out that the French would never have been able to hold the place against the efforts of Ballesteros, backed by the co-operation of the British fleet and the resources of Gibraltar, unless they had kept an army at hand on purpose to protect it ; and if Soult had been foolish enough to waste troops upon so comparatively unimportant an object, nothing could better have suited the Allies. It is not surprising therefore that Lord Liverpool, upon receiving Wellington's reports concerning the whole matter, sharply censured Campbell for meddling

1812. with troops which were not under his control, and risking their safety for no commensurate end. The truth is that Campbell was always burning to conduct little campaigns of his own, with greater zeal than intelligence ; and in this instance he did not hesitate to sacrifice to his petty operations the discipline of the army and the unity of command in the Peninsula. Liverpool's censure, therefore, was not only just but imperatively needed.¹

While these events were passing Suchet had at last 1811. received his reinforcements and pushed forward to the Nov. 4. siege of Valencia. On the 4th of November Reille's French and Severoli's Italian divisions, jointly some fourteen thousand men, received Napoleon's orders to move southward from Aragon and Navarre, and on Dec. 24. the 24th of December they were within two days' march of Suchet's camp. On the 26th, therefore, the Marshal crossed the Guadalaviar in the face of Blake's army, and manœuvred to pen the entire force of the enemy under the walls of Valencia. He was successful ; capturing twenty-four guns and some hundreds of prisoners, with trifling loss to himself, and accomplishing the investment of the city before nightfall. On the night of the 1st of January 1812 the French troops

¹ The authorities for the siege of Tarifa are Belmas, iv. 1-75 ; Jones's *Sieges of the Peninsula*, ii. 468 sq. ; Arteche, xi. 69 sq. ; Raitt's *Life of Lord Gough*, i. 77 sq. ; Napier (particularly appendix vi. to vol. iv.) ; Leval's journal of the siege (*Archives du Ministère de la Guerre*).

I have dwelt on the story at some length because Napier, from blind partiality towards Campbell and Soult, has given the affair of Tarifa a wholly factitious importance. He doubles the losses of the French, solely upon Campbell's conjectures ; entirely ignores the influence of the weather, which was the most important factor of all, upon the French operations ; accepts without question, and actually prints the most absurd and self-contradictory nonsense from Campbell's officers ; affects to believe that Wellington did not know what he was saying when he upheld Cooke's authority and slighted the importance of Campbell ; and of course sneers at the censure passed upon Campbell by the Tory Minister, Liverpool. I do not know the reason for Napier's prejudice in Campbell's favour, but it undoubtedly existed, as is shown by his inaccuracies in the account of Lord Blayney's affair as well as in the present case.

broke ground, and by the 4th their batteries were armed. Blake then hastily abandoned his entrenched camp without the walls, and gathered his force within the old walls of the city. All was confusion and dismay among the defenders. Owing to a bitter quarrel between the General and the civil population provisions were scarce ; and the soldiers, with the exception of those under the command of Zayas, were deserting almost in companies. Suchet added to the prevailing disorder by pouring a rain of heavy shells upon the city ; and on the 9th Blake was fain to capitulate. Something over sixteen thousand men laid down their arms ;¹ and when Suchet entered the city in triumph on the 14th he was received with loud cheers by a portion, and that not the least distinguished or the most obscure, of the population. Thus fell Valencia, which at the outset of the war had so bravely defied Moncey, in shame, scandal, and disgrace ; and with it fell Blake, having proved by this last of a long series of defeats that he was useless for any purpose whatever. Wellington latterly had foreseen the disaster, and had conjectured with grim accuracy that, though a Spanish General and his army might starve in Valencia, the French would find there abundance both of money and provisions.² The reduction of Peniscola after a short siege completed the subjugation of the province ; and the annihilation of a French detachment of eight hundred men near Reuss by General Lacy on the 19th of January was counterbalanced by his total defeat at Altafulla on the 24th at the hands of General Maurice Matthieu. All seemed therefore to be well with the French on the east coast of Spain. It must now be told how none the less the campaign of Valencia was their undoing.

¹ Suchet gives the number at 18,219, but I prefer the statement of a return which I found at the *Archives de la Guerre*. Even this is possibly exaggerated.

² *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 4th, 1811.

CHAPTER XI

1811. WE left Wellington at the end of October reposing in his cantonments on the Agueda, distraught by great anxieties, though animated by yet greater hopes. In the first place, his army was still terribly sickly. Large reinforcements had reached him in July, both of cavalry and of infantry, made up in great measure of young soldiers and of battalions which had passed through the campaign of Walcheren ; and these had fallen down by scores and hundreds under the stress of the Peninsular summer. The distemper, which was due in great measure to the intemperance of the men in the consumption both of fruit and liquor, was not generally fatal, but none the less it filled the hospitals and reduced the ranks of many regiments to one-half their strength. At one moment there were no fewer than seventeen thousand men on the sick-list, and in the Fourth Division there were as many men prostrate as fit for duty. Moreover, the Horse Guards had insisted as a general principle upon the return of battalions which had become attenuated in the field, and the substitution for them of their sister battalions from home ;¹ whereby the Peninsular army gained in numbers, but lost old and seasoned soldiers. In obedience to this rule Wellington had taken leave with a heavy heart of the Twenty-ninth

¹ The Duke of York to Wellington, 23rd July 1811. "Let the rule be this : when the incorporation of the effectives of the two battalions of any regiment shall not exceed 1200 rank and file, merge the two together, and send the officers and non-commissioned officers of the second battalions home." *Wellington MSS.*

and of two other battalions which, though the three of 1811. them counted little more than a thousand men jointly, could not easily be replaced as regards the quality of the rank and file. Happily, as the winter drew near, the health of the force improved, though in November there were still fourteen thousand men in hospital ; and when the New Year came the strength of the army amounted to thirty-eight thousand British and Germans of all ranks present with the colours, besides twenty-two thousand Portuguese.¹

Another difficulty—one that was constantly recurring—was the dearth of capable Generals. The divisional organisation was now so far developed that each division had become, to use Wellington's own words, a complete army, composed of British and foreign troops, artillery and sundry departments, requiring "some discretion and sense," to say nothing of experience, for its proper management. But as fast as the divisional commanders had mastered their business, they had broken down in health. There was not one who had stayed with the army continuously since 1809, as had Wellington himself ; and the brigadiers had been changed as often as their superiors for much the same reasons. Graham, whose frame seems alone to have been comparable for toughness to that of his chief, was beginning to feel the weight of his sixty-three years. Hill had been driven home for a time by wounds, though after his recovery he did not return again to England until the close of the war. And now Generals Dunlop and Sontag, "the former a real loss," had broken down hopelessly ; Alexander Campbell was about to seek more lucrative employment elsewhere ; Houston, who had gone home on leave, was not expected to come back ; and Cole had departed for the time to his place in the House of Commons. There were at least two other officers, respectable in command of a battalion but unfit for any higher charge, of whom Wellington was anxious to be rid, one

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 8th, 14th Aug. ; 11th, 18th, 29th Sept. ; 2nd, 16th, 23rd Oct. ; 6th, 27th Nov. ; 4th Dec. 1811.

1811. of them evidently an undesirable individual. The outlook therefore was not very cheerful, more particularly since Bentinck desired to keep two very good officers, Generals William Clinton and Macfarlane, for his own petty requirements. Colonel Torrens, however, at the Horse Guards, worked indefatigably to satisfy Wellington's demands, with the result that by December there were almost more Generals than could be disposed of. The most notable of the new-comers were Henry Clinton ; Le Marchant, a brilliant officer whose career was too early cut short ; John Byng and Richard Hulse, both of the brigade of Guards ; and James Kempt, whom we last saw on the field of Maida. Among the truants who returned was Tilson, who had now taken the name of Chowne ; and Leith, who resumed his former place at the head of the Fifth Division.¹

In the matter of administration the chief difficulty now as always lay in the dearth of specie, with which was intimately bound up the question of transport and supply. Wellington had written in August that he had never been in such want of money. At that time the pay of the men was two months, and the allowance of the officers six months, in arrear ; and there was no prospect of any amelioration, but rather of increased embarrassment, owing to two principal causes. First, the flow of specie into the Peninsula was checked at its fountain-head by the quarrel between Spain and her colonies ; secondly, owing to the prohibition by President Madison of the trade of the United States with England, American ships required payment in specie for the corn that they brought to Lisbon, instead of taking home its value in English manufactured goods. It was even to be feared that the American Non-Intercourse Act (as it was called) might produce still more serious consequences ; for the harvest of 1811 had failed in England, and, as she could no longer count upon her old sources of supply in the Baltic, it was not easy to divine how she

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Torrens, 11th Sept., 16th, 30th Oct., 2nd, 7th Dec. ; to Cotton, 5th Oct. ; to Clinton, 5th Dec. 1811.

could furnish herself, to say nothing of her army in the 1811. Peninsula, with corn, even could she have afforded to pay for it with precious metal. Moreover, supposing that this difficulty were overcome—as in matter of fact it was—and that the army were supplied with a sufficiency of flour, there remained still the problem how to carry it to the front without specie. The transport-service depended wholly upon hired Spanish muleteers ; and the pay of these people in July was already six months in arrear. It was out of the question to purchase many mules, for their price had risen to £45 apiece ;¹ and even had it been otherwise, it was useless to take them without the muleteers, whose attachment to their animals formed the sole warrant for their faithful service. There was, further, one failing in these muleteers which neither money nor usage could overcome. They would not knowingly work for the Portuguese upon any terms. So long as Portuguese battalions were mixed up with the British, the haughty Spaniards could not tell whether or not they were serving their despised neighbours ; but, if it were a question of victualling an independent Portuguese detachment, they would carry their beasts to the French rather than use them for such a purpose. Moreover, since the Government at Lisbon was incurably slothful and negligent in providing for the transport and supply of its troops, there was always the danger lest the muleteers, wearied out by want of pay, should make their prejudice against the Portuguese a pretext for deserting the British altogether.

All these complications must from the first have been a grinding anxiety to the Commander-in-Chief ; but now that he was meditating offensive operations and even a siege in form, the question of money became doubly perplexing. To make matters worse, his chief Commissary, the very efficient and industrious Kennedy,

¹ 150 dollars. *Wellington Desp.* To Beresford, 2nd Aug. 1811. The dollar at that time cannot be reckoned as costing the British less than six shillings in specie.

1811. seized this particular moment to resign his office, being incited thereto by the importunity of his wife, whose sister had already been the means of withdrawing from Wellington a valuable member of his staff, and no doubt had worked upon the feelings of Mrs. Kennedy. Happily Kennedy's successor, Mr. Bissett, who had been selected by the Commissary-in-Chief in England, was an officer of ability, and had enjoyed the further advantage of studying the commissariats of other countries in the field. It is to him that we owe an exact account of the organisation of the transport and supply in 1812, the year which may be taken as that in which it was finally perfected. According to his book, the unit of infantry for the purposes of the commissariat was the division, consisting of two brigades of foot and one battery of artillery ; the unit of the cavalry was the regiment ; and the unit of horse-artillery the troop ; while the reserve of artillery, exclusive of the batteries attached to divisions, formed another unit, and head-quarters of the army yet another. The item of forage of course accounted for the apparent anomaly that a regiment of cavalry, four hundred strong, was placed on the same footing with a division of infantry numbering six thousand. Even in the infantry the feeding of the field-officers' horses and of the baggage-mules, which were attached to each regiment, was a very heavy task, requiring, roughly speaking, one mule to every six men. But in the cavalry the allowance was one mule to every two men and horses ; so that a regiment of four hundred dragoons, having nearly five hundred horses and baggage-mules, required for the filling of all mouths and for the provision of fuel—which was always scarce in the Peninsula—nearly three hundred commissariat mules to itself. Altogether for all units the British army, at a strength of barely fifty-three thousand of all ranks, needed between nine and ten thousand commissariat mules over and above those employed in regimental transport.¹

¹ Bissett, *The Duties of the Commissariat*, pp. 37-45.

Looking to the fact that he contemplated a vigorous offensive in 1812, Wellington was obliged to supplement his train of mules by vehicles of some description. The native Portuguese car, with its primitive system of wheels revolving together with their axles, he banned altogether, as we know; so slow, cumbrous, and unmanageable were they in the narrow Portuguese roads. He therefore set Bissett to design a suitable cart, and ordered others to be made after this pattern at Oporto and Almeida during the winter of 1811, the wheels having iron axle-trees and brass boxes, most of which had been captured from the French. These carts were to be drawn by purchased bullocks under the charge of native drivers hired for the purpose; and the full number of them, to be ultimately constructed in England and elsewhere, was fixed at eight hundred. They were to be organised into two grand divisions of four hundred, every grand division being distributed into eight divisions of fifty each, and every one of these lesser divisions into two brigades, each of twenty-five carts and fifty-four bullocks, two bullocks being allowed to each cart and four to spare. Each division was placed under the command of a clerk or other subordinate officer in the Commissariat. Trivial though such a matter may seem to the unthinking, the appearance of these carts, which put the finishing touch to the organisation of the transport, marks an important stage in the progress of the war. The waggons of the waggon-train, which had springs, were employed wholly for the service of the sick and wounded, or, to use the modern term, as ambulances.¹

So much for Wellington's difficulties and preparations; let us now look at his plans. All Europe was greatly excited by the prospect of Napoleon's invasion of Russia; and there was expectation in various

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Commissary-in-Chief Gordon, 12th, 25th June, 21st Aug.; to C. Stuart, 4th July; to Liverpool, 1st Aug.; to Beresford, 2nd Aug.; to Torrens, 4th Aug.; to the Cavalry Brigadiers, 31st Aug.; to Bissett, 20th Nov. (3 documents) 1811.

1811. quarters that for so great an enterprise he would withdraw his troops from Spain. This idea seems to have been cherished alike by the English Court and by the Horse Guards, both of which, in Wellington's belief, were anxious to move the army from the Peninsula to some other scene of operations ; and he appears to have feared that the fall of Valencia might be made a pretext for the change. His own view of the situation was singularly sagacious. He admitted the possibility of a " general breeze in Europe " as he called it, but he deprecated premature action, and foresaw no good from any combined rising against France unless the sovereigns were prepared to fight on till they conquered or perished. If they pursued their old practice of sacrificing a part of their territory to save the rest, they could never hope to overthrow Napoleon's system (so Wellington happily defined it) of making war as a financial resource. Already the pay of the French troops in Spain was many months in arrear ; and the Emperor had laid down the principle that no men, except those actually with the colours, should receive the debts due to them, so that, by saving the money owing to the dead, he was able to put a million men into the field for the wages of half a million. Meanwhile, whatever might happen, the British army must not be withdrawn from the Peninsula. Napoleon (so Wellington judged with remarkable correctness) would not greatly reduce his army in that quarter, though he would not reinforce it ; and forty thousand British troops could occupy the attention of infinitely more French troops there than in any other country. Moreover, even if Napoleon were to evacuate Spain, an advance of the Allies upon the Pyrenean frontier of France would compel the employment of two hundred thousand men for its defence.¹ As to the details of the coming campaign, all must depend upon the movements of the enemy. In view of the danger which would

¹ Wellington Desp. To Liverpool, 29th Oct., 4th Dec.; to Sydenham, 7th Dec. 1811.

threaten Carthagena if Valencia should be captured, 1811. Wellington sent a detachment of troops from Cadiz to hold the citadel of that fortress ;¹ and since Bentinck was intent upon operations in Italy rather than on the east coast of Spain, this was the most that could be done upon that side. For the rest he had completed his preparations for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, in the hope that an opportunity might present itself for an attack upon that fortress ; but whether the place should fall or not, he thought it imperative to move southward at the end of February or the beginning of March, and to take advantage of the healthy season, with its abundance of forage after the winter rains, to attempt the capture of Badajoz.²

The third week of December had come before Wellington received intelligence which set him instantly upon the alert. Foy's division of Marmont's army had passed the Tagus into La Mancha, but had since returned ; and Brenier's division had suddenly broken up from Plasencia and crossed the Tietar towards Naval Moral. The explanation of the first of these two movements was that Marmont, under directions from Joseph, had ordered Foy's division to move from Toledo to Cuenca in order to replace a part of the Army of the Centre, which had been detached to Valencia ; but, growing nervous over the attitude of the British on the Agueda, had recalled it.³ By the 10th of December Marmont was reassured, and on the Dec. 10. following day he received definite orders from the Emperor to send twelve thousand men towards Valencia, besides three or four thousand more to guard the lines of communication. Thereupon the Marshal

¹ 2/67th and a battalion of foreign detachments, together 1000 strong. *Wellington Desp.* To Cooke and Henry Wellesley, 12th Dec. 1811.

² *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 18th Dec. 1811.

³ Marmont (*Mémoires*, iv. 77) says that Foy marched on 22nd Nov. ; Girod de l'Ain, *Vie du Général Foy* (p. 153), says that Foy did not receive the order to march until the beginning of December ; and this seems far more likely to be correct.

1811. once more directed Foy to occupy La Mancha ; ordered Dec. Montbrun's cavalry and Sarrut's division to march upon Cuenca ; and, having propounded an ambitious plan to Joseph, declared his intention of following Montbrun in person with two more divisions. To that end he altered the disposition of his army in some respects, shifting Brenier's men from Plasencia into the valley of the Tagus. Foy in his journal reviewed the proceedings with dismay. In his view the entire operation was ill-conceived. Marmont ought to have marched at once with seventeen thousand men, arrived before Valencia like lightning, crushed the Spanish army of Aragon, and flown back to the lower Tagus. "Perhaps," he wrote, with uncommon insight, "the English observing our evacuation of Plasencia will make active demonstrations upon our front, and then the Marshal will never reach Valencia at all."¹

Wellington was puzzled by all these marches and counter-marches. If Suchet had been beaten by the Spaniards, there would have been a reason why Marmont should close in towards him ; but Wellington could not believe in the possibility of such a thing. In the following days the situation gradually cleared itself up. Intelligence came in that the cavalry of the Guard had re-entered France, that the infantry of the Guard was starting northward from Valladolid, that there was a general movement of the French troops about Bejar and Avila to eastward, and, most important of all, that Clauseau's division had marched from the upper Tormes to Avila. Wellington concluded that a great effort was making to deliver Suchet from the guerillas who had tormented him so much in the north, and to ensure the capture of Valencia ; and, though his information was necessarily imperfect, he was not altogether wrong. The Imperial Guard and five regiments of Poles were really withdrawing from Spain in order to proceed to

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool (2 letters), and to Graham, 25th Dec. 1811. Girod de l'Ain, pp. 153-155 ; *Mémoires du duc de Raguse*, iv. 76-77 ; *Mémoires du Roi Joseph*, viii. 129-132.

Russia; but the news of the French movement from Avila was premature. Moreover, Marmont had received on the 29th the Emperor's final orders, which involved a considerable dislocation of his force. The territory now assigned to the Army of Portugal for subsistence and to the Duke of Ragusa for government consisted of the provinces of Avila, Salamanca, Plasencia, Ciudad Rodrigo, Leon, Palencia and Asturias; and his army was to be increased by the addition of Souham's division in the region of Salamanca, and of Bonnet's in Asturias. Lastly, the Marshal was to betake himself in person at once to Valladolid, as his head-quarters military and administrative. He accordingly made over to Montbrun the command of the troops detached to Valencia, and prepared to obey; though until the 5th of January 1812 he remained still at Talavera.¹

Meanwhile on the 1st of January Wellington had issued his orders for the attack upon Ciudad Rodrigo. He had as yet no further intelligence of his enemy's movements than that above stated; but he knew at least that Marmont with the bulk of the Army of Portugal was still in the valley of the Tagus; and he reckoned that, even if he should fail to capture the fortress, he would at any rate compel a part of the corps both of Marmont and of Dorsenne to return with precipitation towards the Agueda. The operations, however, promised, whatever the event, to be costly, for the entire country was covered with snow, which not only made transport the more difficult, but threatened heavy losses among the men from exposure. The opening days of the month were occupied in the construction of a trestle-bridge over the Agueda at Marialva, and in anxious arrangements for bringing forward the materials for the siege. Wellington had hoped to break ground on the 6th, but, as he said, there was no counting on Spanish and Portuguese

¹ *Mémoires du duc de Raguse*, iv. 77, 269-274. *Wellington Despatch* To Liverpool, 1st Jan. 1812.

1812. carters and muleteers, and there were many vexatious Jan. 4. delays. However, on the 4th matters were sufficiently advanced for the troops to be set in motion ; and on that day the four divisions selected for the work of the siege left their cantonments, the First Division marching to Gallegos and Espeja ; the Third occupying Martiago and Zamarra ; while the Fourth and Light crossed the Agueda, the former to San Felices, and the latter to Jan. 8. Pastores, La Encina, and El Bodon. On the 8th the first convoy of stores left the dépôt at Gallegos and passed the trestle-bridge towards Ciudad Rodrigo ; and at noon of the same day the Light Division forded the Agueda once more at La Caridad, a few miles down the water from their cantonments, and invested the fortress. Simultaneously the Fifth and Sixth Divisions crossed the Coa to the vicinity of Almeida ; while the Seventh, leaving Penamacor on the 11th, occupied Fuente Guinaldo on the 13th. To complete his dispositions Wellington on the 9th sent orders to Hill to fall back from Estremadura to his former station between Portalegre and Castello Branco, in order to check any diversion that might be attempted by the French in the valley of the Alagon towards Lower Beira.¹

Ciudad Rodrigo stands on the right or northern bank of the Agueda, crowning the summit of a low oval hill which rises to a height of perhaps one hundred and fifty feet above the water. The city, which is a network of narrow streets, is enclosed within a mediæval wall thirty-two feet high, and covers, roughly speaking, a quadrilateral, measuring about three furlongs east and west by two furlongs north and south. This wall is in turn enclosed by fortifications which were then modern, consisting of a *fausse-braie*, or low rampart, with a revetted ditch, but without a

¹ Wellington Desp. Instructions and Memoranda of 1st Jan. To Liverpool, 7th Jan. ; to Hill, 9th Jan. 1812. Simmons, p. 217 ; Tomkinson, p. 123 ; Green's *Vicissitudes of a Soldier's Life*, p. 73.

covered way. The whole is constructed so far down 1812, the slope of the hill as to afford scanty cover to the Jan. interior wall, and the glacis is so steep as to give but slight protection to the rampart. On the southern side towards the river the declivity is almost precipitous ; but towards the north the ground descends gradually to a slender rivulet, beyond which rises a long narrow ridge, hardly more than two hundred yards from the outer defences. Northward this ridge, which is called the Little Teson, declines again to a second rivulet, from whence the ground swells into a second and more commanding height called the Greater Teson. This was the weakest side of the place, the Greater Teson rising at six hundred yards distance thirteen feet above the level of the ramparts ; and accordingly the French had erected upon it a small redoubt. This outwork presented a salient angle towards the country, and mounted two cannon and a howitzer. Its rear, which was on the slope of the hill, was closed by a low loop-holed wall, with a gate in it, and by *chevaux de frise* on the outside ; and the three remaining sides had a good parapet, a ditch eight feet wide and twenty feet deep, with much water in its lower parts, and very strong palisading at the foot of the counterscarp. The redoubt was further supported by a battery of two pieces on the flat roof of the convent of San Francisco four hundred yards to east and south of it, and by the fortified convent of Santa Cruz about seven hundred yards to south and west. Outside the city were two principal suburbs ; one of them on the other side of the river and connected with the fortifications by a bridge, which is completely commanded by the guns of the southern defences ; the other, that of San Francisco, which lies three hundred yards beyond the north-eastern angle of the outer works. Both had been so far strengthened as to be safe against any attack with small numbers. The place was crammed with artillery and munitions of war, for Marmont had thrown into it the siege-train of the Army of Portugal ; but, owing

1812. to the extreme difficulty of victualling it in the presence of Wellington's army, it was not overstocked with provisions. The garrison counted just over eighteen hundred combatants of all ranks ;¹ and the Governor, Barrié, was, if Marmont be believed, a detestable officer, endowed neither with vigilance nor with resolution.

The ground being rocky on every side except the northern, it was obvious that the Great Teson, which possessed the further advantage of commanding the northern front, must be the point of attack. Therefore, after great parade of examining the fortress from every aspect, Wellington formed a brigade on the northern slope of the hill under cover of darkness ; and at eight o'clock ten companies of the Light Division² under Colonel Colborne advanced to the assault of the redoubt. Four companies³ led the way to occupy the crest of the glacis and open fire ; and these were followed by the escalading party with the ladders. The movement was undetected until at a distance of fifty yards Colborne gave the word "double quick," when the trampling and jingling of the assailants betrayed their approach ; but the defenders had time only to discharge one cannon-shot before the leading companies opened fire and drove them from their guns. The ladder-bearers then came up and placed the ladders in position ; the escalading party⁴ quickly descended into the ditch, where they suffered some loss from shells and hand grenades ; but some swarming up the parapet, while others entered through the gate in the gorge, which had been accidentally burst open by a French shell, they were in a few minutes masters of the redoubt. Of the defenders four only escaped into the

¹ Infantry (34th Light, 133rd Line), 1552 ; artillery (2 cos.), 168 ; engineers, 15 ; Staff, etc., 40 sick, 163—*Total*, 1928 ; deduct dead and deserted, 120. *Grand Total*, 1818.

² 4 cos. 52nd ; 2 cos. 43rd ; 2 cos. 95th ; 1 co. each from the 1st and 3rd Caçadores. This is Colborne's list, but Craufurd in his report mentions 1 officer and 12 men of the 3rd Caçadores.

³ Apparently 2 cos. of the 52nd and 2 of the 43rd.

⁴ 1 co. 43rd ; 1 co. 52nd.

town,¹ three were killed, and forty-eight captured. The loss of the British did not exceed six killed and three officers and seventeen men wounded, so admirable were Colborne's arrangements. Thus a troublesome little obstruction, upon which the enemy had reckoned for a respite of at least five days, was swept away in twenty minutes.²

No sooner did the garrison ascertain the fall of the redoubt than they opened a terrific fire upon it; but Colborne had been careful to collect his men and lead them down to the rivulet at the foot of the glacis, to cover the working parties until the moon should rise. Meanwhile one division of workmen reopened for a distance of one hundred and fifty yards the first parallel made by the French in the siege of 1810, the left flank of the trench resting on the redoubt; while another party dug the communication over the Great Teson to a dépôt which had been formed on the reverse side of the hill. Thus the siege had been well begun when on the 9th the First Division came to relieve the Light; Jan. 9. for Wellington had ordered that each of the four divisions in rotation should do the duty in the trenches for twenty-four hours, so that the men should have three days in quarters for every day of exposure to the bitter cold of the weather.³ On the 9th the first parallel was continued, and three batteries for twenty-seven guns were commenced; and the work was pushed steadily forward on the succeeding days, though, owing to the intensity of the cold and the destructive fire of the enemy, progress was not rapid. The French gunners, having found the range exactly, swept away the besiegers' parapets with salvoes of shell, causing so

¹ See Barrié's letter in Belmas, iv. 293. Belmas himself states the number of the garrison at 50, in contradiction to his own printed authority.

² The best account of this little enterprise is in Moore Smith's *Life of Lord Seaton*, pp. 166-171; with which compare Moorsom's *Hist. of the 52nd*, 150-152. The redoubt is described in Wrottesley's *Life of Burgoyne*, i. 155.

³ The rotation was Light Division, First, Third, Fourth.

1812. many casualties that the engineers were fain to abandon exterior excavations altogether, and to sink their batteries into the earth, so as to obtain the necessary soil for protection. Even more serious was the discovery that part of the first battery had been so faultily designed that five, if not more, of the guns were below the crest of the hill and out of sight of the objects to be aimed at ; with the result that much time was lost in lengthening another battery and transferring the pieces to a situation where the gunners could see their mark.¹

Jan. 13. On the 13th matters came to a crisis. Much of the ammunition necessary for the siege was still at Villa da Ponte, some fifty miles away over the mountains ; and Wellington had every reason to believe that, before it could be brought up, Marmont would have moved to the relief of the place. By this time he was vaguely aware that there was still a French Division on the Tormes and another at Avila, though he could not guess that the first was Souham's, newly arrived upon the scene, and the second Clausel's, which had been relieved by Souham's at Salamanca.² Wellington's original intention had been to erect batteries for thirty-three guns on the Great Teson, work forward under their protection to the Little Teson, raise fresh batteries there to breach the outer and inner walls, sap up to the glacis, and blow in the counterscarp according to good poliorcetic rule. He now consulted his engineers as to the practicability of making a breach with the cannon on the Great Teson only ; and, being answered favourably, he resolved that, if need were, he would storm the place with the counterscarp untouched.

Marmont on his side had shown no great disposition to haste. On the 1st of January Thiébault had written to him from Salamanca that Wellington was certainly intending to take the offensive, probably to attack

¹ Wrottesley's *Life of Burgoyne*, i. 161. Jones's *Sieges*, i. 120, tells only half the truth about this incident.

² Wellington Desp., to Graham, 5th Jan. 1812. *Mémoires du duc de Raguse*, iv. 81.

Ciudad Rodrigo ; and on the 3rd he repeated the warning, giving additional details which lent much force to his opinion. Dorsenne, in forwarding these letters on the 5th, declared that, having received the like alarming reports constantly during the last six months, he attached little importance to them ; but he added that he felt no confidence in Barrié, and that he would be glad to see the Marshal return. On that same day, the 5th, Jan. 5. Marmont quitted Talavera for Valladolid, having set his division of heavy cavalry, his artillery, and the 3rd and 5th Divisions of infantry also on march for the Douro. The rest of his army was scattered in all directions ; the 6th Division in the valley of the Tagus ; the 2nd at Avila ; the 7th at Salamanca ; the 8th in Asturias ; and the 1st and 4th, together with his light horse, on the road to Valencia. Marmont broke his journey at Avila, and hence did not reach Valladolid until the 11th. Barrié had sent out three messages on Jan. 11. the nights of the 9th and 10th to convey news of his peril to Salamanca ; but these had been intercepted by the bands of Carlos d'España and Julian Sanchez ; and hence, extraordinary as it may seem, Dorsenne was still ignorant that anything unusual was going forward at Ciudad Rodrigo when Marmont joined him at Valladolid. Wellington ascertained later that information concerning the siege reached Salamanca on the 13th ; but it seems certain that neither Marmont nor Dorsenne knew anything of the matter until the 15th.¹ It is therefore manifest that Marmont's return to the Douro, which so troubled the peace of the British Commander as to make him alter his plans, was entirely unconnected with Wellington's operations, and due merely to orders written by Napoleon nearly five weeks earlier. Such is the irony of war.

¹ *Mémoires du duc de Raguse*, iv. 82. *Wellington Desp.*, to Liverpool, 15th Jan. 1812. Dorsenne in a letter of 13th Jan. to Berthier talks only of revictualling of Ciudad Rodrigo, and says not a word of relief before a second letter to the same of 17th Jan. (*Arch. de la Guerre*).

1812. Wellington now resolved to begin at once the second parallel and, as a first means to that end, to expel the French garrison from the convent of Santa Cruz. The building was accordingly escaladed and taken by three hundred men of the Sixtieth and of the King's German

Jan. 13. Legion on the night of the 13th after a sharp fight, which cost the assailants thirty-seven killed and wounded. Twenty-seven guns were placed in the battery in the course of the night; and the sap was then carried forward to the Little Teson until the forenoon

Jan. 14. of the 14th, when at eleven o'clock the French made a sortie with five hundred men, reoccupied the convent of Santa Cruz, destroyed the new trenches, and were only checked, as they were actually entering the batteries, by the advance of the relieving division under General Graham. At half-past four in the afternoon the guns opened fire, two of them upon the convent of San Francisco, and the remainder upon the most salient angle of the northern face of the fortress, where the masonry, having been already breached by the French in 1810 and since repaired, was considered likely to be still unstable. The enemy responded vigorously, remarking with surprise that the besiegers turned all their guns upon the selected point, without attempting to silence the cannon on the ramparts. Since the garrison of the convent still clung to their position, a party of the Fortieth was ordered at dusk to drive them from it. This was gallantly done; and the Fortieth then established themselves in the suburb. In the course of the night or of the following day Wellington received more accurate intelligence of the actual situation of Marmont's army, which relieved him of much anxiety, but, as it appears, in no way altered his new plans for the conduct of the leaguer.

Jan. 15. At dawn of the 15th the besiegers renewed their fire and continued it through that day, damaging both the outer and the inner walls so severely that it was thought time to mark out a new battery in a more advanced situation, so as to begin a second breach by a

tower a little to eastward of the first. The place was 1812. cunningly chosen; for the inner wall just at that spot was wholly uncovered by the external wall; and the tower was the one point from which the garrison could pour a flanking fire of artillery upon the main breach. In the course of the night five additional guns were brought into the existing batteries; but the firing was stopped at half-past nine on the morning of the 16th Jan. 16. by a dense fog which continued for over twenty-four hours. Advantage, however, was taken of the lull to extend the second parallel, and to place marksmen within it and in rifle-pits so as to keep up a constant fire on the breach and on the embrasures. Singularly enough Wellington chose this evening to send in a summons of surrender, which was of course answered with defiance. At noon of the 17th the fog lifted, Jan. 17. whereupon both sides again began a furious duel, which wrought much havoc among the besiegers and their defences; but the riflemen, in spite of heavy losses, subdued the storm of grape with which the enemy had endeavoured to overwhelm them. In the night the new battery, slightly in advance of the rest upon the Great Teson, was completed, and fire was opened at daylight of the 18th from thirty-two guns, with such Jan. 18. effect that the main breach was considered practicable by the evening; while at about the same time the tower came down "like an avalanche," opening a second gap of little less extent than the other. Nevertheless the accuracy of the enemy's artillery was such that the advanced sap could not be pushed forward, though the construction of a new battery on the second parallel was carried on without intermission. Late in the evening this work was completed, and a field-piece and a howitzer, being placed in position, poured a rain of projectiles upon the main breach throughout the night, so as to check any efforts of the enemy to raise an interior retrenchment. At daybreak the British resumed the Jan. 19. cannonade with thirty heavy guns upon both breaches with great effect; and in the afternoon Wellington,

1812. after careful reconnaissance, ordered the artillery to be Jan. 19. turned upon the fortifications at large, and sat down in one of the advanced approaches to write his orders for the assault.

The Fourth Division was on duty in the trenches on this day,¹ but the Third and the Light were brought in towards nightfall to form the storming parties. The principal attack, however, was not to open until a series of preliminary and auxiliary movements had been executed. First of all the 2nd Caçadores with the light company of the Eighty-third under Colonel O'Toole were to cross the Agueda, escalade an outwork immediately before it, and capture two guns which commanded the entrance to the ditch at the point where the outer fortifications joined the inner near the south-west angle of the place. This was to prepare the way for Campbell's brigade,² to the four battalions of which were assigned the following tasks. The Fifth Foot, provided with axes and short scaling-ladders, was to beat down the gate at the entrance to the ditch above referred to, scale the outer wall and follow it leftward to the main breach, so as to clear away all the enemy's posts thereon. At the same time the Scots Brigade was to enter the outer ditch by means of ladders, and turn likewise to the left towards the main breach, so as to fulfil the same function in the ditch as was allotted to the Fifth on the wall of the fausse braye. Both regiments were to assemble beforehand at the convent of Santa Cruz, where the Seventy-seventh also was to remain in reserve; while the Eighty-third was posted in the second parallel to cover the advance of the storming party by a continual fire upon the walls. It was expressly ordered that the

¹ There is much conflict of statement as to this small matter; but it is to be remarked that it was the turn of the 4th Division to be in the trenches; and, though Burgoyne and others say that the 3rd Division was on duty, Grattan of the 3rd Division expressly says that the 4th was actually in the trenches when the 3rd formed for the assault.

² Under command of Colonel Campbell of the Scots Brigade during the absence of General Colville.

Fifth and O'Toole's detachment should set out at 1812. ten minutes to seven o'clock, and that Campbell's Jan. 19. brigade should not attempt to ascend the breach until that of Mackinnon had passed through it.

At the same hour a party of one hundred and eighty sappers was to move out, unarmed, but carrying bags of hay and heather, which they were to throw into the ditch so as to enable the stormers to jump down with safety into it. Immediately after them were to follow the forlorn hope under Lieutenant Mackie of the Eighty-eighth, five hundred volunteers of Mackinnon's brigade under Major Manners of the Seventy-fourth, with the remainder of the brigade in support. On the left of Mackinnon the Light Division was formed behind the convent of San Francisco. Three companies of the Rifles were told off to enter the ditch between the two breaches, and, turning to their right, to scour it as far as the main breach. The remainder of Vandeleur's brigade, preceded by the 3rd Caçadores carrying bags of hay, was to attack the lesser breach, headed by a forlorn hope under Lieutenant Gurwood of the Fifty-second, with three hundred volunteers, under Major George Napier of the same regiment, in support. Vandeleur was instructed, upon mounting the gap in the outer wall, to send five companies along the top of that wall so as to support Mackinnon's assault ; and, as soon as communication with the Third Division had been established along both walls, an endeavour was to be made to break open the Salamanca gate close to the north-eastern angle. Lastly Pack's brigade of Portuguese was to deliver a false attack upon the San Pelayo gate in the centre of the east front. The hour fixed for the advance of the main storming columns was seven o'clock ; and the time was to be regulated, not by signal, but by the preliminary onset of the Fifth Foot ; for the essence of the plan was that Mackinnon's brigade was to be covered upon both flanks as it swarmed up to the main breach.

A slight accident sufficed to upset Wellington's elaborate arrangements completely, though everything

1812. began with good promise of success. The night was Jan. 19. fine though bitterly cold, with a bright moon which was occasionally obscured by heavy clouds. The Fifth, and not the Fifth only, but by some mistake the Seventy-seventh also, stole out at the appointed hour from the convent of Santa Cruz, and moving swiftly and silently to the entrance of the ditch reached it absolutely unobserved. Above them the French manning the ramparts kept up an aimless and unanswered fire, quite unconscious of the danger that was threatening, the noise happily serving to drown the stroke of the British axes as the men plied them against the gate and palisade which barred the access to the ditch. A gap was soon cut in the timber ; and all were pressing forward to pass through it when a young ensign, fresh from the wilds of Kerry, raised a yell of triumph which was promptly repeated by the soldiers. In an instant there descended on them a rain of hand-grenades and light shells, while bullets flew thickly upon the column from all quarters ; though happily O'Toole had done his task well and already silenced the two guns in the adjoining outwork. Three or four breathless minutes elapsed while the ladders were fixed, when the men of the Fifth crowded so closely after their beloved commander, Major Ridge, that one ladder broke and a mass of climbers fell down upon the bayonets below. The men struggled up again, however, and swept away a hostile picquet from the summit of the outer wall ; and the column descending into the inner ditch rushed along it until checked by the heap of rubbish which marked the site of the main breach.

Here to their astonishment they found no sign of the storming party ; but almost immediately the Scots Brigade appeared, having also reached the outer ditch unobserved and scaled the gap in the outer wall. Campbell, perceiving at once that hesitation and delay would be fatal, directed the whole of his men to form rapidly and threw them forthwith upon the main breach. They surged eagerly forward, but on reaching the summit

were staggered for a moment by the firing of a train 1812. which kindled a number of shells that had been strewn Jan. 19. upon the ruins, and by a sharp fire of musketry from a breastwork thrown up by the enemy in rear of the breach. Recovering themselves, they parted right and left to turn this unforeseen obstacle, and found their progress obstructed on all sides. In front of them was a sheer drop of sixteen feet into the town, and then a space filled with carriages, *chevaux de frise* and similar encumbrances, with the breastwork aforesaid rising above it ; while to right and left the inner wall had been retrenched by two ditches, ten feet broad and ten feet deep, cut across it, and by two transverse ramparts thrown up between the ditches. Blinded by the alternation of flashing lights and of darkness rendered denser by smoke, the column floundered on. Campbell and a small body of thirty or forty men dashed at the retrenchment on the right, and, finding the planks laid by the French for crossing the ditches still more or less in position, passed over, swept the defenders away, and ensconced themselves in a commanding post close by. From this point of vantage Campbell repelled a hostile party which was on its way to the rampart, and sent out patrols as far as the Agueda gate and to other points in the town, but was unable, in spite of all endeavours, to call any more men to him.

The rest of the stormers had, in fact, been irresistibly attracted toward the fire of the enemy in their front and to their left, where two guns, sweeping the head of the breach with a cross-fire of grape, caused frightful havoc. Mackinnon's brigade had by this time come up, and their rush bore the defenders back, when the sudden explosion, by design or accident, of a French magazine at the junction of the breastwork and the rampart, sent Mackinnon himself together with many officers and men flying into the air, and brought the assault momentarily to a standstill. The French hastened to recover their lost ground, but their opponents quickly rallied. Many

1812. lay down and poured upon the breastwork in rear of the Jan. 19. breach a very effective fusillade; while Major Thompson of the Seventy-fourth, followed by three men of the Eighty-eighth, dashed into the entrenchment on the left to seize the nearest and most deadly of the two guns that were playing upon the assailants. The French gunners, five in number, stood most nobly, loading and firing with the greatest coolness to the last, but were over-powered and slain every one of them at their pieces after a desperate resistance. Thus relieved from the scourge of grapeshot the Third Division carried the rampart and retrenchments, and passed on to confused fighting in the streets.

Meanwhile the Light Division had also made its way to the lesser breach somewhat late, for Major Napier was still receiving orders from Wellington at the convent of San Francisco when the attack of the Third Division began. Whether purposely or by chance few of the Caçadores carried bags, as had been ordered;¹ but the storming party, having traversed the intervening ground at great speed, leaped without waiting for them straight into the ditch. In spite of the directions given by Wellington, the leaders mistook a ravelin for the bastion which had been battered, and only after some small delay discovered the true situation of the breach. During this brief interval the losses of the column were heavy. George Napier was struck down by a grape-shot, and Craufurd by a bullet through the lungs; but the men dashed on, some of them to the right, where not a few were caught by the explosion which overthrew Mackinnon, but the principal portion into the breach, which, not being retrenched, was easily carried. The British then rushed on to the great square by the Cathedral, which seems to have been reached almost at the same moment by a mob of soldiers from all the battalions of the Third Division;

¹ Costello and Kincaid say that the Portuguese would not come on. George Napier says that there was some mistake, and does not blame the Caçadores.

the enemy having given way in the streets near 1812.
the main breach on hearing the cheers of the Light Jan. 19.
Division as they entered the town. Thereupon all
resistance appears to have ceased. Gurwood, pursuing
the fugitives to the castle, received there in person the
sword of Barrié. Pack's Portuguese, turning their
feint into a real attack, likewise broke into the streets,
and joined their comrades in the great square ; and the
French garrison, driven back from all quarters into the
square or into corners of the ramparts, laid down their
arms. The assault had been successful at every point,
and Ciudad Rodrigo was won.

There followed a disgraceful scene of riot and
pillage. Setting our wars in India aside, it may be
said that a British force had never stormed a town of
any importance since Cromwell had sacked Drogheda
and Wexford in 1649. No orders or instructions had
been issued for general guidance in the event of a
successful attack, and no one appears to have known
or to have considered what was to be expected or
apprehended upon such an occasion. Officers noticed
that the men's faces assumed an aspect of ferocity such
as they had never seen before ; but they seem neither
to have known nor cared what this sudden expression
of savagery might portend. Numbers of the men dis-
persed in search of plunder directly they entered the
town ; but a mixed multitude, as we have seen, drifted
down to the Cathedral square, where suddenly without
any warning or reason they all began to fire at the
windows of the houses, at the heavens, at each other,
as though unable to remain quiet. Picton's voice was
heard above the din "with the power of twenty trumpets,
proclaiming damnation to everybody" ; while the coolest
and most active of the officers, seizing the barrels of
broken muskets for want of a better weapon, belaboured
every man whom they saw loading or firing. Such was
the disorder that, in the opinion of one who was present,
the French prisoners, unarmed though they were, might
by a single bold rush have recovered the town. Mean-

1812. while the immediate effect of quelling the disturbance
Jan. 19. in the square was to scatter the stormers in small parties
all over the town. Colonel Macleod of the Forty-third
alone kept his battalion together for a time and en-
deavoured with its help to maintain order ; but, despite
of all his efforts, his men were gradually sucked into the
whirlpool of indiscipline. A section of the mob dis-
covered the French commissariat-store, over which some
officer, with better intention than intelligence, had posted
a single sentry. The unfortunate man—a German—
was bayoneted, and the plunderers, crowding in, made
straight for the store of rum and broke in the heads
of the barrels. A wild struggle ensued for possession of
the liquor ; and the first to reach it were tilted off their
legs head-foremost into the butts and smothered. The
rest soon drank themselves into a state of frenzy, and
amid their scuffling and fighting they overturned a light
and set fire to the building. Many were burned where
they lay, stupefied with spirits ; and it was only by the
utmost efforts of Barnard, who seems to have kept at
any rate some men in hand, that the conflagration did
not spread and consume the entire city. Parties of men
invaded the chapels, carried off the candles to light
them to their work, and proceeded, under the guidance
of some rascally Spaniards, to blow off the locks of the
houses with their muskets, and seize or destroy every-
thing that they could find. Men were seen, hopelessly
intoxicated, with half a dozen silk gowns wound about
them, or garnished with twenty pair of shoes hung round
their waists. Nevertheless the disorder was not of long
duration. By dawn there was already some reappearance
of discipline, and by noon the last of the troops
had been cleared out of the city. Many of them were
so much encumbered by their booty that they could
hardly move ; and Wellington himself, seeing a column
march out bedizened with every description of garment
male and female, was fain to ask, “ Who the devil are
those fellows ? ” He was answered that they were the
Light Division.

The capture of Ciudad Rodrigo after twelve days 1812. of open trenches was a great feat of arms ; and the Jan. 19. traveller, who wanders round the walls, little changed after the lapse of a century, cannot help marvelling that it was ever accomplished. Some training had indeed been given during the winter to selected battalions of the Third Division in the art of the sapper ; but, generally speaking, the men were still unhandy and the officers still lukewarm where the work of the spade was concerned. Burgoyne complained that British troops never accomplished their tasks in the trenches within the time laid down in the French text-books ; and the engineer-officers themselves, though they toiled and hazarded their lives with blind devotion, were by no means faultless in their plans and their arrangements. The organisation for bringing up the stores was bad ; and the system of assigning the duty in the trenches to four divisions in rotation for twenty-four hours apiece was not found satisfactory. In the first place the divisions were of unequal strength ; in the second, the men, having marched twelve or fifteen miles from their cantonments, were not fresh ; and in the third, having in many cases to ford the Agueda on their way, they arrived with their clothes half frozen, could not be warmed except by work, and could not labour continually and energetically for twelve hours. Still, in spite of all shortcomings and of a terrible fire from the ramparts, the besiegers made rapid progress, the more so since they conducted their operations upon a new principle. “The whole object of our fire,” wrote Wellington, “was to lay open the walls. We had not one mortar, nor a howitzer except to prevent the enemy from clearing the breaches, and for that purpose we had only two ; and we fired upon the flanks and defences only when we wished to get the better of them with a view to protect those who were about to storm.”¹ It was this abstention from all effort to silence the enemy’s guns which caused the losses during the siege

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Duke of Richmond, 29th Jan. 1812.

1812, to amount to five hundred and fifty-three, of whom one Jan. 19, hundred and thirty-six were Portuguese.

The assault was more costly than it should have been, for reasons which have already been stated, namely the delay of the main columns in the advance, and the betrayal of the movements of Campbell's brigade by an excited Irish subaltern. Nevertheless the casualties did not exceed four hundred and ninety-nine of all ranks, of whom one hundred and five were killed. Some of the slain beyond question fell by each other's hands in the tumult after the town was gained ; while the accidental explosion of the magazine alone is said to have slain or injured one hundred and fifty men. Among the wounded were Generals Vandeleur of the Light Division, John Colborne of the Fifty-second (who was disabled for eighteen months by a very painful wound in the shoulder), and George Napier, who was shot down at the breach and lost an arm. But the foremost of the fallen was Craufurd, who after lying in great agony for forty-eight hours died of his wounds on the 24th. Enough has already been said of him to show what manner of man he was, his great defects and his yet greater merits. His body was laid at the foot of the breach where he fell ; but his name will never be forgotten while the British army lasts, as that of the man who, after Moore, had the greatest share in the training of the Light Division.

The losses of the French are not easily ascertained.¹ Wellington reported that he had taken close upon eighteen hundred prisoners of all ranks ; but even if this figure be assumed to include the wounded, and the number of the killed be set down at no more than one hundred, the total exceeds the numbers of the garrison as stated in the French returns. I am bound to say, however, that I regard these returns with some suspicion.

¹ "It is a remarkable feature," wrote Gomm at this time, "in the history of this siege, & one that will distinguish it perhaps from that of all towns carried by assault, that the loss of the besiegers doubles that of the besieged."

The besieged appear to have fought well, but to have been ill commanded ; for all British accounts agree in condemning Barrié for lack of energy and vigilance. It seems certain that the assault was not expected by him ; and it is said that an officer of the Fifth, who was carried off in the rush of the French as they retired from the breach, found him unwilling to believe even then that an attack was actually in progress. His own account sets forth that his dispositions for meeting a storm had been made in the early morning ; but this, in view of the British narratives, is incredible. In any case he made no attempt to retrench the lesser breach, which was obstructed only by a twenty-four-pounder gun placed lengthwise across the opening. Upon the whole I conceive that Marmont was right in condemning Barrié as a detestable officer, though it may be doubted whether, with so weak a force, any commander could have prolonged the siege for more than two or three days.

So short a delay would have made no difference to the result. Marmont, upon learning of the siege on the 15th of January, had at once ordered a hasty concentration of his troops at Medina del Campo and Salamanca. Besides the two divisions that had accompanied the Marshal to Valladolid, Bonnet had been summoned from Asturias, Foy and Montbrun with all their soldiers had been recalled by forced marches from their journey towards Valencia, and Dorsenne had set six thousand of the Young Guard, as well as cavalry and artillery, in motion towards the same points. Thus on the 26th and 27th Marmont reckoned that he would have thirty-two thousand men, and on the 1st or 2nd of February forty thousand men, in front of the British on the Agueda. Even if his expectations had been realised, he would have arrived too late. The fortress, which in the hands of five thousand raw Spanish levies had resisted Ney for twenty-five days, when transferred to two thousand French soldiers, succumbed to Wellington in twelve. "Never," wrote Marmont, surprised into unwilling

1812. eulogy, “was such an operation pushed forward with the like activity”; and for the moment he was fairly stunned by the blow. His advanced base for invasion of Portugal was gone; the gate which led into the country from the north-east was closed; and the key for reopening it—the siege-train for the Army of Portugal—had been captured in the lock, so to speak, within the walls of Ciudad Rodrigo.¹

¹ The authorities for the siege and capture of Ciudad Rodrigo are, on the French side, Marmont's *Mémoires*, and Belmas's *Journaux des Sièges*; on the English side for the general operations Jones's *Sieges*, Wrottesley's *Life of Sir J. Burgoyne*; for the 3rd division, Maxwell's *Peninsular Sketches*, i. 225-266; Grattan's *Adventures of the Connaught Rangers*, i. 186-236; Donaldson's *Eventful Life of a Soldier*; for the Light Division, Kincaid's *Random Shots and Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*; Costello's *Adventures of a Soldier*, Leach's *Rough Sketches*, George Napier's *Early Military Life*, Cooke's *Memoirs of the Late War*.

CHAPTER XII

THE capture of Ciudad Rodrigo coincided in time, 1812. curiously enough, with Wellington's receipt of the news both of Victor's failure before Tarifa and of Suchet's triumph at Valencia; while at the same moment he became aware through an intercepted letter of Marmont's concentration on the Tormes. He therefore lost no time in effacing his trenches and repairing the fortifications, tasks which, together with the execution of several British deserters taken in the place, fully occupied the first days that followed after the assault. Yet, while taking every precaution in case Marmont should turn his position by the pass of Baños, Wellington divined that the Marshal would probably make no movement when he found that he was too late to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo. The British General was right. On the 21st¹ Marmont Jan. 21. reached Fuente Sauco, about eleven miles north-east of Salamanca, where he met the news that the fortress had fallen. Under the shock of the misfortune he abandoned all idea of an advance, though he did not yet countermand his orders for concentration, lest Wellington should essay an offensive movement upon the Tormes. But by the 28th Wellington had made up his mind that Jan. 28. there was nothing to prevent him from proceeding with the siege of Badajoz. He therefore gave directions on that day for bringing up stores from Setubal to Elvas, and sent instructions to Hill to arrange an expedition for the purpose of destroying the bridge over the Tagus

¹ So Marmont says in his *Mémoires* (iv. 83). Napier, I know not on what authority, gives the day as the 26th.

1812. at Almaraz. The Army of Portugal would, as he calculated, need this bridge in order to advance to the relief of Badajoz, and, if deprived of it, might very likely be compelled by the swelling of the river to resort to the bridge of Toledo.¹

On the same day, however, the weather broke up; and the frost, which had so greatly facilitated the operations of the siege, gave place to heavy rain, which impeded not a little the repairs of the fortress. On Jan. 31. the 31st the troops moved back to their former cantonments; and two days later the Agueda rose so high that the suburbs were two feet deep under water, the trestle bridge at Marialva was swept away, the stone bridge was rendered useless, and the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo was left in isolation from the Allied army. Such a situation naturally caused alarming rumours that Marmont was advancing; and every effort was made to render the defences proof against a sudden attack. The great English historian of the war has written that, if the Marshal had but moved up to Ciudad Rodrigo at this moment, the place could not have resisted him; but this is extremely doubtful, for it seems that the river was not impassable for more than twenty-four hours,² and it is certain that the French knew not whither to turn for supplies. Be this as it may, Marmont had no sooner learned of the return of the British into their cantonments than he broke up his own army likewise. His head-quarters were fixed at Valladolid; three divisions under Foy were sent to the valley of the Tagus and its vicinity; Bonnet's division, which was on its way from Asturias, was halted in Leon; a strong advanced guard with plenty of light cavalry was stationed at Salamanca under Montbrun; and the rest

¹ Wellington Desp. To Liverpool, 21st Jan.; to Hill, 22nd, 28th Jan.; to H. Wellesley, 29th Jan. 1812.

² See Jones's *Sieges*, i. 153-154. Napier says that the great flood came on the 28th Jan., and that the fortress was isolated for several days; but I prefer the solid facts in Jones's Diary to these loose statements, which are made chiefly to introduce the remark that "the greatest warriors are the very slaves of fortune."

of the force was cantoned on the Douro and in the province of Avila. The mere catalogue of these movements, however, gives a very imperfect idea of their results upon the efficiency of the French army. Bonnet had been dragged down from Asturias in midwinter ; Montbrun and Foy had been recalled, the one from Alicante and the other from Villarobledo by forced marches, and in Foy's case certainly with a very slender supply of victuals ; and as a consequence the detachments of all three commanders had suffered severely from sickness and fatigue. Moreover, new life was infused into the Spanish guerilla-bands in every quarter, and General Abadia was able to show greater activity in Galicia.

In the south Soult until the 15th of January remained exceedingly nervous about the intentions of Hill. He exhorted Marmont to make a demonstration towards Merida and Truxillo ; indeed, being totally ignorant of what was going forward in the north, he seems even so late as on the 27th to have counted upon some such manœuvre. Not until the 31st did he hear simultaneously of the siege and of the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, when he at once conjectured that Wellington would shortly appear before Badajoz. Intelligence, received a week later, of the arrival of guns and ammunition at Elvas increased his anxiety for that fortress ; and on the 9th of February he wrote an urgent appeal to Marmont to make preparations to succour it. Soult had reorganised the First, Fourth, and Fifth Corps into six divisions of infantry and three of cavalry, with a total strength of about fifty thousand men. On the right the Fifth Division and one brigade of cavalry under d'Erlon were on the Guadiana about Medellin, the Sixth Division and one brigade of cavalry being also at d'Erlon's disposition in the same quarter ; the Fourth Division and a division of cavalry under Leval occupied the provinces of Granada and Malaga ; the Third Division and the rest of the besieging army round Cadiz was

1812. entrusted to Villatte ; the First Division under Con-Jan. roux watched Ballesteros about San Roque and Gibraltar ; and the Second Division, under Latour Maubourg but subject, together with a brigade of cavalry, to the orders of Villatte, was in the interior of Andalusia. In Murcia the wreck of Freire's and Mahy's armies were beginning to reassemble about Lorca, so that it was impossible to diminish Leval's force ; Ballesteros was too dangerous to be left unsurveyed ; Andalusia was barely safe with but five thousand men to watch it ; and lastly, orders had arrived from Paris to send two complete French regiments of infantry, as many of cavalry, and all the Polish troops, altogether some seven thousand men, to Burgos, and thence to France. In the circumstances Soult informed both Marmont and Berthier, quite truly, that he was powerless to do anything for Badajoz, and pressed the latter for a reinforcement of twenty thousand men, urging that, since Ciudad Rodrigo had fallen, it would be more profitable to strengthen the Army of the South than the Army of Portugal.¹

The situation of the two Marshals, therefore, was not enviable. They had no wish to work together, though Marmont frankly recognised that without help from his troops it was utterly impossible for Soult to relieve Badajoz, if that fortress were besieged. Napoleon now interposed from Paris to make matters worse. First, on the 23rd of January he criticised, not perhaps without reason, Marmont's orders to Montbrun for the expedition to Valencia, and directed that detachment to be recalled at once, at the same time ordering Marmont to make over one of his divisions to Dorsenne and to take five thousand drafts in exchange. On the same day he censured Dorsenne for not sending a division to Burgos for the repression of Mina's

¹ *Arch. de la Guerre.* Soult to Berthier, 11th, 24th, 27th, 31st Jan., 1st, 7th, 21st, 22nd Feb. ; to Marmont, 9th Feb. 1812. *Mémoires du duc de Raguse.* iv. 283-285, 302-305 ; Soult to Marmont, 4th Jan., 7th Feb. 1812.

guerilla-bands. Next, having heard that Ciudad Rodrigo was besieged, he instructed Dorsenne on the 27th (eight days after the fall of the fortress) to delay for the present the return of the Guard to France. Shortly afterwards, having learned of the loss of Ciudad Rodrigo, he wrote on the 11th of February a succession of angry letters. Dorsenne he censured as the general to be held responsible for the disaster. Soult he reproved for asking help from Marmont against so weak an adversary as Hill. Marmont he blamed for not having advanced to Salamanca, so as to threaten Ciudad Rodrigo. Further, he gave Marmont positive orders to fortify Salamanca, assemble seven divisions there, collect his siege-train (which had, as we have seen, been captured), and hold the British in check by threatening Almeida. "You must think the English mad," such were his words, "if you suppose them capable of marching on Badajoz while you are at Salamanca, that is to say in a position to reach Lisbon before them." Lastly, Napoleon directed the Marshal to send Bonnet's division back to Asturias at once. The whole of these instructions were repeated in a second letter of the 18th of February, with an intimation that the Duke of Ragusa, by keeping a division in the valley of the Tagus, and generally concerning himself with operations in that quarter and in the valley of the Guadiana, was meddling with matters which were none of his business. The Emperor (such was the purport of the missive) had given orders to Soult to place twenty thousand men under d'Erlon's command at Merida so as to keep Hill permanently in check and paralyse him completely; and that was sufficient. The truth is that Napoleon's thoughts at this time were occupied solely with the invasion of Russia, for on this same 18th of February he instructed Dorsenne to set the whole of the Imperial Guard on march for Bayonne within twenty-four hours.¹

¹ *Arch. de la Guerre.* Berthier to Dorsenne, 23rd Jan., 11th, 18th Feb.; to Soult, 11th, 18th Feb.; to Marmont and Joseph,

1812. The absolute futility of these multifarious orders, issued in every case to meet a state of things that had ceased for several days to exist and based upon imagination rather than fact, is sufficiently apparent. Marmont was unable to concentrate anywhere because he had no supplies, and his troops even when dispersed had considerable difficulty in feeding themselves. To all intent a desert lay between him and Wellington, and this desert he was unable to cross. The British Commander himself, with the ports of Lisbon and Oporto behind him and the sea always open to British shipping, could only just contrive to maintain his army unstarved in the field, after devoting vast trouble and expenditure to the organisation of transport. Soult was in the like difficulty with Marmont both for victuals and for money. His army was already overtaken by dearth and actually threatened with famine ; and it was absolutely impossible for him to assemble twenty thousand men without withdrawing all garrisons from the interior of Andalusia.¹ Meanwhile the departure of the troops needed for the Russian campaign, and the consequent redistribution of the forces in Spain into five armies, led to infinite trouble and confusion.

During this time Wellington had already entrusted to Dickson the task of collecting a siege-train at Elvas. His first idea had been to move the ordnance employed at Ciudad Rodrigo overland to its new destination ; but the draft-bullocks were so weak that the project was abandoned, and it was decided to send sixteen heavy howitzers only by road, and to make good the deficiency by landing at Setubal sixteen twenty-four-pounders recently sent from England, together with twenty eighteen-pounders lent by the Admiral from the fleet. Dickson set out accordingly for Setubal on the 28th

18th Feb. 1812. Ducasse, viii. 309. Berthier to Marmont, 20th Feb. 1812. *Mémoires du duc de Raguse*, iv. 294, 320. Berthier to Marmont, 23rd Jan., 18th Feb. 1812.

¹ *Arch. de la Guerre.* Soult to Berthier, 21st Feb. 1812.

of January, and the cannon started on their journey 1812. to Elvas two days later. On the 2nd of February Feb. 2. Wellington shifted his head-quarters from Gallegos to Freineda, and promised himself a day with the hounds on the 3rd,¹ but bad weather put a stop not only to all hunting but to all serious work for some days ; and it became evident that the operations at Badajoz must necessarily be delayed. Hill also reported that the only road to Almaraz took such a direction as to make the capture of the enemy's bridge of boats almost impossible of accomplishment ; whereupon that project likewise was for the present postponed. But these were only the first of a series of difficulties which cropped up to impede the enterprise against Badajoz.

There is no point upon which Army and Navy are so likely to misunderstand each other as a question of artillery ; the purpose, broadly speaking, of naval guns being to strike a single object—namely, a ship—and of military guns to overthrow as many small objects—namely, men—as possible. When therefore Wellington applied to the fleet for guns, the Admiral thought it sufficient to make over to Dickson twenty Russian eighteen-pounders which by chance were in the marine arsenal at Lisbon, assuring him that they were of the description named by the General, and would take the English shot very well. As a matter of fact the English shot was by nearly half an inch too small for these guns, and Dickson very respectfully protested against being saddled with such ordnance. Sir Thomas Hardy, the captain of the fleet, however, showed no great alacrity in substituting other pieces for them ; and Dickson finally decided to take what he could get, sifting out with enormous labour an adequate quantity of Portuguese and Russian shot which fitted the Russian cannon tolerably well. Wellington made no complaint to the Admiral, but in his private correspondence he remarked sarcastically that the naval officers seemed to regard

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Graham, 2nd Feb. 1812.

1812. precision in the fire of artillery as no more necessary Feb. in a siege than in an action at sea. Ultimately the Admiral consented to provide ten English cannon from a Danish frigate ; but by that time Dickson had overcome the difficulties connected with the Russian guns, and at first declined to complicate matters by taking any others, though he appears in the end to have sent forward both the English and the Russian pieces. The incident is interesting chiefly as showing that the Navy still thought that their worst was good enough for the Army.¹

Then followed the usual troubles with the Portuguese Government over the furnishing of transport for the siege-train from Alcacer do Sal, on the Setubal estuary, to Elvas. Wellington's relations with that Government were not of the most cordial, nor his correspondence with it of the most friendly. By this time he had obtained authority to displace Principal Souza from the Council of Regency ; but this would have been no remedy for the old and crying evil that the Ministers would not compel the magistrates to enforce the existing laws for supplying an army with carriage. The whole of the Portuguese authorities were afraid of incurring unpopularity, and therefore, while severe in exacting all that was required from the poor who could not resist, they were careful to exempt the rich and the well-to-do. Wellington had already laid the utmost possible burden upon his own service of transport ; but he was obliged to charge it in addition with the heavy task of bringing up munitions of war, simply because the Portuguese Government would not help him. There was no lack of carriages at hand, particularly in one town—Evora—which so far had not suffered from the war ; but nothing could induce the Regency to make the people place them at Wellington's disposal. The result was that the operations were delayed until the breaking of the rains at the vernal

¹ *Dickson MSS.* pp. 385-697. *Wellington Desp.* To Graham, 18th Feb. 1812.

equinox, which was exactly what the British General had desired to avoid.¹

1812.
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Next, it was necessary to concert arrangements with the Spaniards for handing over Ciudad Rodrigo to the Spanish Government. Castaños had arrived at the place before the end of January, and Wellington, in order to make matters as easy as possible, had undertaken to execute the work of restoration at the expense of the British Government and with the labour of British soldiers, as also to supply the stronghold with provisions for five months. Though Wellington had particularly desired that no troops, except the actual garrison, should enter the fortress, the Spanish General at once fixed his head-quarters there and began to draw extravagant rations for himself and his staff. Then, presumably in order to excuse his presence, he suggested that the handful of five thousand men, called "the 5th army," together with the force of Ballesteros, should take an active part in the coming operations. Wellington at once set his foot firmly upon this proposal. He pointed out that the Spanish Government could not feed its troops in Castile, and that he most certainly neither could nor would; and he recommended that both Ballesteros and the 5th army should be employed independently of each other in the south, threatening Seville in order to distract Soult's attention from Badajoz. Castaños appears to have accepted this plan with docility; and Wellington then formulated his designs to meet all possible movements of the enemy. Four different courses were open to Marmont upon learning of the siege of Badajoz. First, he might leave two divisions to hold down Leon and Old Castile, and lead the rest of his army into Extremadura. In that case Abadia with the army of Galicia, Carlos d'España with a part of the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo, and all the guerilla-leaders in the northern provinces should endeavour to do as much mischief

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To C. Stuart, 29th Feb.; to Liverpool, 27th March 1812.

1812. as they could. Secondly, Marmont might leave three Feb. divisions and his cavalry to support Soult against the British on the Guadiana, and invade Galicia with the five remaining divisions. In this event Abadia would oppose him in front, while the Portuguese generals Bacellar and Do Amarante in Traz-os-Montes could harass his flanks and rear. Thirdly, Marmont might attack the frontier of Portugal north of the Douro ; and then it would be the duty of the Portuguese to check the French as far as possible in front, while Abadia fell upon their flank and rear. Lastly, Marmont might pass the Agueda below Ciudad Rodrigo, and possibly cross the Coa also, so as to cut off Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo from the interior of Portugal. In that case Bacellar was to collect all the militia of the northern provinces behind the Coa, keeping touch with such part of Carlos d'España's force as was not in garrison, and endeavour to protect the British magazines on the Douro and the Mondego ; while Carlos d'España should break down the bridges on the Yeltes and the Huebra, and, if necessary, those over the Azava at Castillejos and over the Agueda at Barba del Puerco. Full and minute instructions were furnished to Bacellar for his guidance in every one of these three last contingencies.¹

As regards the British Government there remained the old difficulty of specie, which Wellington had proposed to alleviate by the issue of a certain sum in English Exchequer-bills, hoping thus possibly to draw out of its hiding-places some of the coin that was undoubtedly hoarded in Lisbon and in Spain. Whether this plan would have been attended with any success Wellington himself was doubtful ; but in any case it did not commend itself to the British Cabinet, and was accordingly abandoned.² Another effort to persuade

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Castaños, 16th, 24th Feb. ; to H. Wellesley, 19th, 25th Feb. ; to Bacellar, 27th Feb. 1812.

² Napier of course says that Liverpool's objections to the plan were "futile," but does not condescend to particulars. I question

the principal merchants in the Peninsula to accept the 1812. Bank of England's notes as cash appears likewise to have failed ; and Wellington was fain to manage as best he could without specie. For the rest, he complained with righteous indignation of the bad quality of the entrenching and cutting tools, and indeed of all implements supplied by the Store-keeper General, which had been found grievously wanting before Ciudad Rodrigo. He also pleaded for the formation of a corps of Sappers and Miners, beginning himself to train one upon the spot, with the result that in April a school was established at Chatham for the instruction of such a corps under the command of a very able officer of Engineers, Captain Pasley.¹

On the 16th of February the first of Wellington's Feb. 16. troops began to move southward,² many of the regiments marching by devious routes in order to pick up new clothing which had been brought up by water to various dépôts on the Douro, Mondego, and Tagus. All this could be done without anxiety, for by the 2nd Wellington had ascertained with fair accuracy the quarters into which five out of Marmont's eight divisions had been dispersed ; and by the 19th he knew exactly the stations of the entire eight. He had arranged, as we have seen, to distract Soult and Dorsenne ; and, having put two British regiments into Carthagena, he felt little apprehension of any formidable movement by Suchet. The guerilla-

whether Napier or any one outside the Cabinet was competent to weigh them ; and I think it extremely doubtful that he had the slightest idea what they were, for Lord Liverpool's letter is not among the Wellington Papers, nor have I been able to find it elsewhere.

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 11th, 12th Feb.; to Peacocke, 14th Feb.; to Cooke, 29th Feb. 1812. Connolly, *Hist. of the Royal Sappers and Miners*, i. 188.

² It is difficult to speak with certainty of the movements of the army at this time, but Tomkinson, under date of the 16th, says that some of the infantry had marched for the Tagus, that the 1st division had gone to Abrantes to get its clothing ; and that Anson's Light Cavalry Brigade started for Thomar on the 18th.

1812. bands indeed kept the last-named General employed Feb. 26. even at the very gates of Valencia. By the 26th the whole of the army, except the Fifth Division, was in motion ; but Wellington himself remained stationary at Freineda, desiring to delude the enemy by not shifting his head-quarters until the last moment. Nevertheless Marmont on the 22nd had heard of the movement of the British towards the Guadiana ; and he ordered Foy to push forward an advanced guard to Jaraicejo and to close up to rear of it the 1st, 4th, and 6th divisions, which were under his command, in readiness for the march. At the same time he left Bonnet in charge of two divisions on the Tormes, established Souham's division on the Douro and Esla, and prepared to set out with the 2nd division in person to join Foy. By these dispositions he flattered himself, apparently till the end of his life, that he forced Wellington to suspend his enterprise ; but nothing could be further from the fact. The British General had foreseen exactly what Marmont was most likely to do, except that he had expected him to leave only two divisions instead of three behind him, and had no intention of being diverted from his own course. The only effect of Marmont's preparations upon Wellington was to delay his departure from Freineda for five days, since he knew that the removal of his head-quarters would be the signal for the French to advance. In justice to the Marshal, however, it should be added that on the 23rd he wrote a long letter to Berthier, predicting certain disaster unless the Emperor's system of carrying on the war were altered, and begging to be relieved of his command.¹

Soult was by this time before Cadiz, hoping to infuse some vigour into the siege by opening a bombardment with mortars, which he had ordered to be cast at Seville, with a range of close upon six thousand yards. On the 21st of February he had been expecting moment-

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Bacellar, 27th Feb.; to Liverpool, 4th March 1812.

arily to hear that Badajoz had been invested by Hill 1812, under the protection of an imaginary corps of twenty Feb. thousand men which was reported to have landed lately at Lisbon under General Hamilton. Soult had therefore detained the troops which he had been ordered to send back to France, and had written to Marmont to ask definitely whether he could count upon the help of three of his divisions. But on the 22nd—the very day on which Marmont took the alarm—Soult decided, upon intelligence from d'Erlon at Villafranca, that Wellington had renounced his designs upon Badajoz for the present; and under this false impression he directed six French and as many Polish battalions, besides two regiments of cavalry and some odd detachments, to march at once for Burgos pursuant to Napoleon's instructions. D'Erlon had evidently been completely deceived by Hill's retirement to his old cantonments after his raid to the eastward, and had no inkling of the wrath to come. A few days later Soult heard that a weak column under General Maransin had been attacked by Ballesteros at Cartama near Malaga on the 16th, and, but for the timely arrival of General Rey with reinforcements, would have been very roughly handled, Maransin himself being hurt and about one hundred and fifty of his men killed, wounded, or taken.¹ Such events, however, were too common to occasion Soult any special anxiety; and he was satisfied when his flying columns compelled Ballesteros to retire to Tarifa, hoping before long to bring that troublesome partisan to action and so make an end of him. Not until the 5th of March was he again perturbed by March 5.

¹ Ballesteros reported this affair as a victory (*Wellington Desp.*, to Liverpool, 4th March 1812); and Arteche represents it as a rout in which the French were hunted into Malaga, quoting a Spanish account which reports that Maransin was brought into the town with seven or eight wounded officers, and that the ground was strewn with dead (xii. 174-175). Martinien's list, however, shows that not a single officer was killed and no more than five besides Maransin wounded, one of whom belonged to Rey's column, about which Arteche says nothing.

1812. reports both from d'Erlon and from Philippon, the commandant at Badajoz, that the British preparations had been resumed at Elvas; and then he wrote to Berthier that, unless all his troops in the interior of Spain were sent down to him, and authority granted to him to give direct orders to twenty-five thousand of the Army of Portugal, he could not be responsible for the consequences.¹

Meanwhile, the last of the British troops, the Fifth Division always excepted, had marched southward on Feb. 26. the 26th of February; and Wellington himself, being now exactly informed as to Marmont's dispositions, March 6. quitted Freineda quietly on the 6th of March, leaving the 1st German Hussars under Major-general Victor Alten on the Yeltes to screen the withdrawal of the departing regiments, and to spread the report that the Commander-in-Chief contemplated hunting in that country. On March 10. the 10th, upon reaching Portalegre, Wellington received the news that he had been promoted to an earldom for the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, and on the following March 11. day he arrived at Elvas. There he found that, for reasons already stated, the stores necessary for the siege were not yet accumulated, and that several battalions, which had marched to the rear to get their clothing, had not yet returned. None the less he determined to invest Badajoz on the 16th. Marmont so far had made no sign of bringing down additional troops from the north, and it was doubtful whether he was yet aware of Wellington's departure from the Agueda. Soult was still at Cadiz, as we know, and his force in the field in Estremadura did not exceed two divisions of infantry and a brigade of cavalry, numbering perhaps eleven to twelve thousand men. Hence there was no reason to apprehend that the enemy would for some time be in a position to intervene in the operations.

March 15. Accordingly on the 15th a pontoon-bridge and a flying-bridge were after some delay thrown over the Guadiana,

¹ *Arch. de la Guerre.* Soult to Berthier, 21st, 22nd, 24th, 27th Feb., 5th March 1812.

the former at a narrow point in the river about ten miles below Badajoz,¹ the latter about a mile and a half above it; and in the evening a brigade of Hamilton's Portuguese division crossed the water to protect these bridges. On the 16th at daylight the First, Sixth, March 16. and Seventh Divisions under the command of Graham marched for Valverde on their way to Zafra, in order to watch the movements of d'Erlon and Soult; while the Third and Fourth Divisions bivouacked for the night on the heights to the south of Badajoz. On the morrow the Light Division joined the Third and March 17. Fourth, making up a total of about eleven thousand men; and, under the direction of Beresford, who had rejoined the army, these completed the investment of the fortress on the southern bank of the Guadiana. At the same time Hill advanced from his cantonments with his own and Hamilton's divisions and Long's cavalry upon Merida and Almendralejo, to watch Marmont's force on the Tagus.

On the very day of the investment, however, Wellington received intelligence that Marmont was withdrawing three out of the four divisions from that quarter to the north, and leaving only that of Foy at Talavera.² Wellington naturally inferred that some diversion towards Galicia or the north of Portugal would probably follow; but, having taken all necessary measures to meet such a movement, troubled himself little more about it. He knew not yet—though intercepted despatches were shortly to reveal it to him—that Marmont on the 3rd of March had received the Emperor's orders to concentrate his army at Salamanca and with sad misgivings had obeyed them, leaving Foy to follow from Estremadura as soon as he should be relieved by

¹ Napier mentions only the pontoon-bridge and says that it was four miles from Badajoz; I prefer the evidence of Burgoyne (Wrottesley, i. 167).

² Wellington does not mention Marmont's change of dispositions until his letter to Liverpool of 20th March; but Burgoyne knew of it on the 17th (Wrottesley, i. 169), so Wellington must have known it too.

1812. a detachment from Joseph's Army of the Centre. It was very well for the Emperor to say that an advance upon Ciudad Rodrigo would cause Wellington to raise the siege of Badajoz instantly ; but the Marshal had neither magazines, transport, nor siege-train ; and the British General, being perfectly aware of these facts, would not suffer himself to be disturbed by a mere concentration.¹ Soult was hardly more at his ease than was Marmont. He had begun the bombardment of Cadiz

March 13. on the 13th with some vague hope of alarming the Allies for its safety ; but he had heard of Wellington's arrival at Portalegre and could not doubt that it portended an attack upon Badajoz. It was impossible for him to march to the city's relief without leaving all Andalusia open to Ballesteros ; and even then he could take with him but twenty thousand men, too small a number to loosen the grip of the British upon the fortress and compel them to fight. Moreover he had just heard of the withdrawal of Marmont's three divisions from the Tagus, and foresaw that this movement might be fatal.²

March 17. A reconnaissance upon the 17th showed that Badajoz had been considerably strengthened since its last investment by the British. To speak first of the outworks : Fort San Christobal had been greatly improved, and a strong redoubt had been built on the site of Wellington's breaching battery ; while a covered communication between the fort and the bridge-head had been nearly completed. In the fort of Pardaleras the gorge had been enclosed, and the fort itself had been connected with the body of the place by intermediate works. In the main fortress a cunette had been dug in the ditch ; on the eastern side the stream of Rivillas had been dammed up so as to form an impassable inundation ; on the north front the breach battered by Wellington had been rebuilt in the shape

¹ See the correspondence printed in *Wellington Desp.*, ed. 1852, v. pp. 804-807.

² *Arch. de la Guerre.* Soult to Berthier, 15th March 1812.

of a tower and mounted with several guns ; and on the 1812. western front, which was the weakest, and by the south- March 17. western angle, three ravelins had been thrown up, one of which was completely and a second partly revetted, while the third consisted of earth only. The whole of these last were covered by an elaborate system of mines, which by great good fortune were revealed to Wellington by a sergeant-major of the French sappers, who deserted in a rage and brought his maps with him. The garrison numbered just over five thousand men of all descriptions, leaving, after deduction of sick men and non-combatants, about forty-five hundred efficient of all ranks, which was hardly enough for the extent of the fortifications. One hundred and forty pieces were mounted on the works, but there was insufficiency both of powder and of shell in the magazines, Hill having twice prevented the entrance of a convoy of ammunition from Seville. Of victuals there was six to seven weeks' store, gathered chiefly through the energy of the able, watchful, and valiant commander, Philippon.

Any attack upon the Castle, as now strengthened, was hopeless ; and the engineers, having neither trained sappers, trained miners nor mortars, shrank from the difficulties of attempting the western front. It remained therefore only to take advantage of a defect in the right or southern face of the Trinidad bastion at the south - eastern angle of the fortress, which made it possible to breach the main scarp of the bastion from the heights of San Miguel over against it ; and since these heights were themselves crowned by the Picurina redoubt, it was necessary first of all to master that work. Accordingly the park was massed in rear of the heights ; and, when night fell, the working party began in wild wind and rain to open a trench of communication thirteen hundred yards long from the park to the first parallel, which was marked out about two hundred and fifty yards from the redoubt. The garrison, not expecting such a proceeding, did not detect what was going forward until daylight, when a heavy fire of

1812. musketry was opened from the redoubt and of cannon March 18. from the fortress. At dusk of the 18th two batteries were traced out opposite the two faces of the salient March 19. angle of Picurina ; though when morning broke the enemy's sharp-shooters, having made themselves additional cover, annoyed the working parties greatly. At one in the afternoon eleven hundred French infantry and forty cavalry under General Veiland formed under shelter of the covered way which connected the lunette of San Roque with Picurina, and, favoured by a fog, made a rush upon the right of the British parallel, while another party from Picurina itself attacked it on the left. The British soldiers, working up to their hips in water, were caught unarmed and defenceless, and were driven from the trenches in disorder, nor was it for some time that they could be rallied ; but at length, charging the enemy, they hunted them in their turn back to the town.¹ The French cavalry, meanwhile, galloped round to the park and had time to cut down a few unarmed men before beating a retreat. The enemy also carried off over five hundred tools, but suffered somewhat severely, having one hundred and eighty—including thirteen officers—killed and wounded. The casualties of the Allies were about one hundred and fifty,² and among the wounded was the Chief Engineer, Colonel Fletcher, whom, however, Wellington still retained in charge of the siege, visiting his tent every morning to consult him as to the work of the next twenty-four hours. After this experience a squadron of horse with a battery of field-guns was kept constantly mounted in rear of the heights of San Miguel.

On the following days the parallel was prolonged to

¹ If we are to believe Grattan, he alone had caused his men to throw down their tools and pick up their arms, which enabled him to repulse the French at one point. *Adventures in the Connaught Rangers.*

² These are the figures given by Jones ; and the casualty list, which shows 3 officers killed and 5 wounded, bears it out. On the contrary, Jones gives the number of tools captured at 200, while Belmas states the number at 545.

the northward, beyond the lunette of San Roque, and 1812. four more batteries were begun ; but the incessant rain greatly hindered the progress of the work. On the 22nd March 22. the garrison, having thrown up cover for three field-guns on the north side of the river,* opened so destructive a flanking fire upon the trench that Wellington summoned General Leith, who was with the Fifth Division in Campo Maior, to invest the place on the northern side. In the afternoon there fell a terrific shower ; all the trenches were flooded, the pontoon-bridge was carried away, and eleven pontoons were sunk at their anchors. Cut off by this accident from his supplies and from the battalions which were on march to join him, Wellington became extremely anxious. "We are not within twenty thousand men so strong on the left of the Guadiana as we ought to be," he wrote to Graham ;¹ and he urged that officer and Hill to thrust d'Erlon's troops back from their positions in the district east and south of Medellin, called La Serena, in order at least to delay the junction of Foy's division with d'Erlon, if, as Wellington feared, such a movement were in contemplation. From this circumstance it seems reasonable to believe that, had Marmont kept his four divisions, as he originally designed, on the Tagus, Wellington might at this crisis have raised the siege.

On the afternoon of the 24th the weather cleared March 24. up, and in the course of the night the six batteries were completed and armed with twenty-eight heavy pieces, thirteen of them against Picurina, seven against the lunette of San Roque, and eleven to enfilade the south faces of the Trinidad bastion and the San Pedro bastion next to northward of it. At eleven o'clock on the 25th these batteries opened fire and were vigorously March 25. answered by the cannon of the fortress ; but the guns of Picurina were none the less dismounted, and the parapet so much ruined that the defenders made every preparation against an assault ; repairing such damage

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Graham, 24th March 1812.

1812. as they could, distributing along the parapet loaded March 25. shells and powder-barrels to be thrown at assailants, and attaching fuses to three mines which had been dug on the crest of the glacis. Apprised of these precautions, General Kempt, who commanded in the trenches, determined to deliver his attack as early as possible. He therefore assembled a reserve of one hundred men under Captain Powis of the Eighty-third in the battery over against the salient angle of the redoubt, a detachment of two hundred men under Major Rudd of the Seventy-seventh at the extreme left of the parallel, and a similar detachment of two hundred of the Eighty-eighth under Major Shawe of the Seventy-fourth at about the same distance to the right of the reserve. Of these the left column was to move round the southern flank of the work and attack the gorge, while the right column, leaving half of its numbers to intercept any reinforcements sent from the main fortress, was to turn the fort by the north and join the left column before the gorge. These parties, all from the Third Division, were preceded by about one hundred men of the Light Division¹ with axes, crow-bars and ladders ; for the redoubt was known to be strong, and indeed proved to be even more formidable than had been supposed. The gorge, though without a counterscarp, was closed by a triple line of stout, slanting palisades, so traced that the defenders could sweep it with a flanking fire. On the remaining faces the scarp rose perpendicularly above the bottom of the ditch for fourteen feet, at which height slanting stakes had been driven in above the revetment, the slope of sixteen feet beyond it being such as men could ascend with no great difficulty. Only at the salient angle had the parapet been damaged and the palisades overthrown, and this was the one point where the defences had been materially weakened.

¹ Moorsom states that they were of the 52nd under their own officers, and it is certain that two officers of that regiment were wounded in the assault. Jones describes them as Sappers and Miners, and states their number at forty-eight.

About nine o'clock,¹ at the signal of a gun from an adjoining battery, the columns of Rudd and Shawe March 25. moved out, and the former reached the gorge undiscovered ; but, on attempting to destroy the palisades, the men were shot down so rapidly by musketry that after suffering very heavy loss they gave up the effort. Shawe's party, likewise failing at the same point, drew round to the left flank of the work, where Captain Oakes, finding the ladders too short for the ascent of the scarp, threw three of them across the ditch to form a bridge, and after a sharp struggle forced an entrance. These attacks had diverted the chief attention of the garrison to their flanks and rear, and Kempt now launched his reserve straight upon the salient angle. Planting their ladders on the stakes, Powis's soldiers waited until some twenty or thirty had mounted, and then pressing in together drove the French, not without sharp fighting, from the parapet. This decided the fate of Picurina. A reinforcement sent from the fortress was met and routed by the detachment of the right column, which had been left behind for the purpose ; the axe-men of the Light Division, finding the gorge no longer swept by musketry,² were able to break in the gate and enter

¹ So says Jones, who is confirmed (or copied) by Belmas ; Napier gives the hour at "about nine" ; Burgoyne at half-past eight ; Grattan relates circumstantially that the great cathedral bell of the city tolled the hour of eight, and that the signal followed immediately upon the last stroke, which I take to be a picturesque untruth.

² Napier quotes an anonymous officer to the effect that the assailants would never have carried the Picurina had not the axe-men of the Light Division, "compassing the fort like prowling wolves," found the gate and broken it down. This I believe to be nonsense ; for all authorities, including Wellington and Belmas, agree that it was Powis's attack which decided the affair ; and it is difficult to understand how the axe-men could have approached the gate in the gorge unless the defenders, who had at the outset foiled every assault on that side, had been diverted by an attack in another quarter. Meanwhile not a single other authority mentions this breaking down of the gate, and Napier does so obviously for the sake of flattering the Light Division—which needs no flattery.

1812. the work from the rear ; and after a struggle of three-quarters of an hour the British were masters of the lunette. Out of the French garrison of two hundred and thirty, only one officer and thirty-one men escaped ; the commandant, two more officers and eighty men being captured, and the remainder killed, or drowned in the attempt to pass over the inundation. The British casualties amounted to four officers and fifty men killed, fifteen officers and two hundred and fifty men wounded, making three hundred and nineteen in all out of fewer than six hundred engaged. Few officers indeed were left standing at the close of the assault, which was a desperate affair and very creditable to the Third Division. The fact is that, heavy though were the British losses, the French behaved badly. The mines were not sprung, nor were the shells and powder-barrels exploded ; and, in brief, the attack ought not to have been successful. So strongly did Philippon feel this that he held up the misconduct of the garrison of Picurina to reprobation in a general order.

A lodgment was at once made in the captured redoubt, and, although this was swept away next day by a heavy fire from the fortress, it was quickly replaced by another. Both sides exchanged a violent cannonade until dark, when the two batteries which had been raised against Picurina were demolished, and three more were traced out : one (numbered Seven) of twelve guns immediately to the left of the captured lunette, to breach the south face of the Trinidad bastion ; one (numbered Nine) of eight guns just outside the gorge, to breach the left flank of the Santa Maria bastion, next to westward of the Trinidad ; and one (numbered Ten) of three guns on the first parallel, to enfilade the ditch in front of the principal breach. Philippon, now realising for the first time the true direction of the British attack, exerted himself to improve the defences between the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions ; and his sharp-shooters, well sheltered behind sand-bags and gabions, prevented all work on the exterior of the new

batteries after daylight. During the three following days the second parallel was with some difficulty extended to the right, with the view of driving the enemy from the lunette of San Roque which protected the dam of the inundation ; and a new battery (numbered Eight) of six guns was begun in the gorge of the redoubt, to play against the flank of the Santa Maria bastion. On the 30th the breaching battery, March 30. number Nine, opened fire, but the gunners suffered much from the musketry of the French sharp-shooters until a trench was thrown up in advance for riflemen to keep down this fire ; and the explosion of a magazine by a shell from the fortress killed and injured many men. Moreover, the shot from the breaching battery seemed to make little impression upon the masonry ; and, to add to Wellington's embarrassments, there had arrived on this and on the previous day somewhat disquieting news from without.

Soult had left Cadiz for Seville on the 23rd, and had issued orders for the assembly of such soldiers as he could spare for a march to the relief of Badajoz ; but he was obliged to leave two divisions behind him to beleaguer Cadiz and watch Ballesteros, and could bring no more troops to d'Erlon than would make up a total of twenty-one thousand men. He had expected to leave Seville on the 30th ; and Wellington, being apprised of this, recalled Graham to Villa Franca and Zafra and Hill to Merida, at the same time ordering the Fifth Division to move to Graham's support, and replacing it before San Christobal with a Portuguese brigade. He was anxious to keep Hill at Merida as long as possible, in case Soult should approach Badajoz by the north bank of the Guadiana ; but, if the Marshal should advance by the shortest route, Graham had orders to collect his force in the wood to south of the position of Albuera. It is very clear that Wellington felt little anxiety as to the result of this menace from the south, and the less so since Morillo and Penne-Villemur were on their way to make a diversion

1812. in the county of Niebla ; but in the north affairs wore an unpleasant aspect. Marmont had contrived by great exertions to scrape together fifteen days' supplies ; and, after detaching a strong division to Asturias, had March 29. marched from the Tormes on the 29th with some twenty thousand men for the Agueda. He had of course no siege-train ; but he had managed to collect a few heavy cannon, and there was a report that twenty more pieces had entered Spain from Bayonne a month earlier. All this would have been of small importance if the Spaniards had taken due care for the safety of Ciudad Rodrigo ; but they had signally omitted to do so. It had been arranged that the garrison should be three thousand strong, and Wellington had not only thrown into the fortress provisions for twenty-nine days, but had given an order upon the British magazines for two months' supply in addition, besides furnishing money for completion of the repairs of the fortress. Yet in less than a month Carlos d'España was whining that he could not proceed with the restoration of the works for want of British masons, and that he had only victuals for twenty-three days ; the fact being that, from sheer indolence, he had stationed four thousand men in the fortress instead of three thousand, and had omitted to bring into the place the supplementary supplies freely given to him by Wellington. The outlook therefore was serious ; and the British General may be pardoned if he displayed considerable indignation with the Spaniards. It was just such incorrigible negligence and helplessness as these of d'España that drove British officers to distraction.¹

However, Wellington only pushed forward the siege of Badajoz with the greater vigour. Thirty-eight guns poured an unceasing stream of shot upon the bastions of La Trinidad and Santa Maria ; but not until the April 5. morning of the 5th of April could the engineers report that the breaches would be practicable by sunset. At

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To d'España, 20th March ; to Liverpool, 27th March ; to Graham and Hill, 1st April 1812.

noon Wellington inspected them in person, and, having heard of Soult's arrival at Llerena on the 4th, gave orders for the assault to be delivered in the evening. But the engineers, after further examination, pleaded for the battering of a third breach between the two bastions, and accordingly at four o'clock the assault was countermanded. On this evening Leith's division was brought round to the Cerro del Viento, about a mile and a quarter to south-west of the fortress; and Hill, after breaking down the bridge at Merida, fell back upon Talavera la Real, within twelve miles of Badajoz. It was further arranged that, in the event of Soult's nearer approach, two divisions should be left in the trenches, while the remainder of the army should offer him battle at Albuera. In the course of the night fourteen heavy howitzers were moved into a new battery on the extreme right of the first parallel; and on the morning of the 6th fire was reopened from fourteen cannon upon the curtain between the bastion of La Trinidad and that of Santa Maria, with the result that by four o'clock a practicable breach had been made. Wellington therefore ordered all the batteries to be turned upon the defences, and issued his commands for the place to be stormed at half-past seven that evening, an hour which, owing to the impossibility of completing the preparations, was afterwards postponed until ten.

Once again, therefore, all the established rules of the besieger's art were to be ignored, from sheer want of proper means to apply them. By right the counterscarp should have been blown into the ditch, so that over its ruins and those of the battered scarp opposite to it a formed body of men could have rushed into the breach. Instead of this, the assailants would have to jump or climb down into the ditch, and there form for the decisive assault; and a commander so able and energetic as Philippon was not likely to permit them to do so with impunity. In the course of the siege he had already raised earthen counter-guards and retrench-

1812. ments to cover the curtain between the bastions of April 6. Trinidad and Santa Maria at one point, and between those of San Pedro and San Antonio at another ; and whether for the construction of this work, or independently of it, he had excavated a ditch at the foot of the counterscarp which raised its height to sixteen or seventeen feet. Water had been admitted to this excavation, which was invisible to the besiegers, and the space in the ditch, upon which Wellington had calculated for the formation of his storming columns, was thus entirely filled. The French working parties had laboured with extraordinary devotion to clear away the ruins below the breached wall until the fire of the besiegers fairly forbade the effort ; and as early as on the night of the 30th of March the commanding engineer had begun to retrench the ruined defences, and had erected a large battery on a level with the Castle in a situation to overlook the great breach. Where the parapet had collapsed with the fall of the scarp, it was replaced by wool-bags and sand-bags ; and, when the assault was seen to be imminent, *chevaux de frise*, made of sword-blades, were placed in front of them. The slope of the breach, further, was covered with planks studded with spikes a foot long, and below these again was a chain of buried shells ; while powder-barrels had been made ready to be rolled down into the ditch and to be exploded, together with the shells, in the thick of the assailants. The garrison at noon of the 5th of April numbered a little over four thousand men, of whom seven hundred picked soldiers were allotted to the defence of the breaches, with a battalion of from four to five hundred more in support ; three or more loaded muskets for each man being laid ready on the parapet. Philippon, though suffering from a wound received on the 3rd, was still and always the soul of the defence.

The orders for the assault were as follows :

On the right the Third Division, furnished with long ladders, was to move out of the right of the first

parallel shortly before ten o'clock, cross the Rivillas a 1812. little above its junction with the Guadiana, and carry April 6. the Castle by escalade.

In the centre the Fourth and Light Divisions were to make for the curtain between the bastions of La Trinidad and Santa Maria, hugging the edge of the inundation as closely as possible, and leaving each a reserve of a thousand men in some quarries close by. The advanced party of each division was to carry twelve ladders, and the forlorn hope was provided with sacks of hay to break the fall of the soldiers into the ditch. The idea was that part of the men should be spread along the crest of the glacis to keep down the fire of the garrison, while the remainder rushed on to storm ; the Fourth Division turning to the right to take the breaches in La Trinidad and in the curtain to west of it, while the Light Division should turn to its left towards that of Santa Maria.

On the left, Leith's division was to make a false attack on Pardaleras, but attempt in earnest to carry by escalade the bastion of San Vicente, by the north-western angle of the fortress.

Lastly, as supplementary attacks, the guards of the trenches, under Major Wilson of the Forty-eighth, were to storm the lunette of San Roque ; while General Power and the Portuguese were to make a diversion by a feint assault upon the bridge-head on the other side of the Guadiana.

The night closed in darkly ;¹ and a thick mist rising from the waters hung low between besiegers and besieged. All was still and silent, for the batteries upon both sides were dumb.² At eight o'clock the battalions appointed for the assault marched up to their places of assembly, and piling arms waited impatiently

¹ It was not Easter Sunday, as Grattan falsely states, but the second Monday after Easter.

² Napier's story about the sentinels crying from time to time that "all was well in Badajoz" was evidently derived from a private soldier. Every hour they shouted, "Sentinelles ! garde à vous," which the British soldier construed to be "All well in Badahoo."

1812. for the decisive hour. By half-past nine all was ready, April 6. and the British were formed in deep columns, the men parading without stocks or knapsacks, their shirt-collars unbuttoned, their trousers tucked up to the knee. Many had not yet received their new clothing, and their rusty tattered jackets added to the wild appearance of brown faces half hidden in a ruff of unkempt beard. All were to outward semblance quiet and resolute ; but there was hardly one who did not promise himself some revenge for previous failures before Badajoz, some reward for the past weeks of danger and hardship in flooded trenches ; and there were many who, in Napier's phrase, had grown incredibly savage.

About twenty minutes to ten the silence was broken by a sharp crackle of musketry before the lunette of San Roque, where the British guard in the sap opened fire upon the two faces, while the escalading party stole round to the rear. So fully were the defenders occupied by the fire in front that the storming party scaled the rampart almost unresisted, and, coming in upon the backs of the French, mastered the work immediately. Measures were taken at once to destroy the dam which made the inundation, but this task was not completed in time to affect the main attack.

Almost simultaneously Picton's brigade came into action. "Some persons are of opinion that the attack on the Castle will not succeed," the General had said before starting, "but I will forfeit my life if it does not." Under the guidance of an acting engineer, Lieutenant McCarthy of the Fiftieth, the column stole forward in perfect silence, Colonel Williams of the Sixtieth leading with three companies of his own regiment and the light companies of the division ; after which followed in succession Kempt's three battalions, Campbell's brigade, and the two Portuguese regiments of Champalimaud. Hearing the fire at San Roque, Picton began to suspect that he had been led astray. He drew his sword, and was only with difficulty prevented from cutting down the unfortunate McCarthy ;

but was appeased when he found that he had reached 1812.
the first parallel, where Major Burgoyne of the Engin- April 6.
eers was awaiting him. The advanced party under
Williams then passed on quietly to the Rivillas, and
some at least of them had crossed the water by a mill-
dam and lain down on the further bank, when a French
sentinel in the covered way discharged his musket. Not
realising that they were so close to the enemy, and thinking
that they had been discovered, the leading men of the
Sixtieth began firing ; and the alarm was promptly given.
A blast of grape and musketry was instantly turned
upon the division and was presently concentrated upon
the mill-dam, which was so narrow that the men could
only cross it in single file. Confusion arose at once,
for nine battalions were huddled together at this narrow
causeway, with shot and shell tearing through them.
Picton was struck down for a time by a painful wound
before he reached the passage ; Kempt, who took over
the command from him, was severely wounded in the
act of passing ;¹ several soldiers had slipped off the
dam, which was knee-deep in water, and were drowning ;
while the bearers of ladders and axes were over-
whelmed by the press of the crowd behind them.
McCarthy, however, struggling forward, with the help
of a few men broke down a paling which blocked the
way, and hurried on with the ladders to the front
between the bastions of San Pedro and San Antonio.²
This was a mistake, for Wellington had expressly
ordered the escalade to take place at the actual wall
of the Castle ; and the consequences were soon appar-
ent. Caught under the cross-fire from the two bastions,
and overwhelmed by a deluge of shells, logs, heavy
stones, cold shot, and other missiles from the top of the
wall, the men were swept away as fast as they came to
the ladders. Five of these with great difficulty were

¹ So says Wellington's despatch. McCarthy would make this happen later, but his narrative is extremely confused.

² This is the account of Belmas (iv. 350), and it explains why the first escalade failed.

1812. eventually manned, but four out of the five were soon April 6. broken at the top and slid away into the angle of the abutment ; and the few brave soldiers who mounted the fifth were killed as soon as they reached the summit. For nearly three-quarters of an hour, it should seem, the Third Division struggled vainly to scale the wall, when at last they fell back baffled and took shelter behind a mound off the south-eastern angle of the Castle.

Meanwhile the Fourth and Light Divisions had also opened their attack upon the breaches, their storming parties advancing from the quarries close to the foot of the glacis very soon after ten o'clock. Just before they moved off, the enemy threw out two or three fire-balls in their direction ; and shortly afterwards a single musket-shot was fired, evidently as a signal, from the ramparts. In unbroken silence the British stole up the glacis to the edge of the ditch, planted their ladders and descended, the enemy observing their every motion but quietly biding their time. Then suddenly, when the ditch was crowded, the French kindled the train of shells which had been laid in the breach ; and with an appalling explosion most of the storming party of the Light Division were blown into the air. The ditch had been filled with overturned carts, barrows, damaged gabions and other obstacles ; and these catching fire blazed up to light the defenders to their work. Philippon had reckoned that so terrible a slaughter would have daunted the comrades of the fallen ; but on the contrary the main bodies of both divisions flew the more eagerly to the assault, neither knowing nor caring what dangers lay before them. The excavation dug at the foot of the counterscarp made the descent into the ditch twice as high as the engineers had supposed, and being full of water caused the death of many by drowning. Moreover, by some unfortunate error, both divisions made for the same point instead of for two distinct openings, and, meeting opposite the unfinished ravelin outside the appointed bastion, mistook it for the

breach. Swarming up the rude earthwork they came 1812. into full view of the enemy on the ramparts, and were April 6. swept away in scores and hundreds by a concentric fire of grape and musketry. The sharp-shooters left on the glacis to keep down the fusillade of the defenders had been driven off by a raking fire from the bastions, and the French could mow down their assailants at their ease. Crowded together, blinded and bewildered, the stormers exhausted themselves in a series of gallant but futile rushes at the right and left breaches amid a very hell of bursting grenades and powder-barrels, and neglected, in the confusion, the centre breach which was the easiest of all. Many brave men reached the summit, but were there stopped by sword-blades set deep in trunks of trees, and fell pierced by a score of bullets. One rifleman tried to creep beneath this obstacle, and was found next day with his head battered to pieces and his arms and shoulders riddled with bayonet thrusts, having given way not an inch but struggled forward to the last. And amid the wild yells and curses of the British rose the loud laughter of the French as they stood gallantly to their work and shouted the taunt, "Why don't you come into Badajoz?"

After vain endurance of a terrific fire for an hour the survivors of the two divisions fell back, and climbed up the ladders to the glacis ; but here they met the Portuguese Reserve of the Fourth Division ; and the whole rushed down once more into the ditch to snatch victory, if they could, from the mouth of the pit. All that impetuous valour could do was done. Officers exerted themselves again and again to lead parties up the breaches ; and one of them, Lieutenant Shaw, stood up for some time alone after all who followed him had been struck down. Messenger after messenger came to Wellington in the quarries, bringing ever worse news ; until at last as a climax arrived the report that no progress had been made, nor could be made, since nearly all the officers and vast numbers of the men were fallen. Thereupon the recall was sounded, and in

1812. sullen rage the survivors trooped back to the quarries. April 6. As the last stragglers came in, the clock in the cathedral tower peacefully tolled out the hour of twelve.

Major Stanhope, who was with Wellington at the time, has recorded that the miserable anxiety as to the issue of the assault made those two hours the most terrible that he ever passed. One faint hope only was left. There had been some sound of musketry and of cheering far away to the north-west, where Leith and the Fifth Division had been appointed to escalade. Amid all the tidings of failure Wellington remained cool and unmoved. When the last hopeless report came in from the divisions at the breaches, his jaw dropped, and his face, under the torchlight, seemed deadly pale ; but it was with perfect calm and firmness that he laid his hand on the arm of Dr. M'Grigor, who stood by him, and said, "Go over immediately to Picton and tell him he must try if he cannot succeed in the Castle." Then seeing that he had unwittingly addressed the wrong man, he apologised and left the order unrepeated.¹

Meanwhile, however, Picton, having recovered from the first shock of his wound, had reached the foot of the Castle wall some time after the failure of the first attack, and had tried a second venture for himself. His second brigade having come up and formed, Colonel Ridge and Ensign Canch of the Fifth moved two ladders for some distance to the right until they reached the place in the wall where the British had battered a breach in the previous siege.² The damage had been repaired, but the wall at this point was considerably lower—twenty feet as against thirty feet high—than at the

¹ Col. James Stanhope's MS. Journal and M'Grigor's *Autobiography* (pp. 273-274) both give an account of this period of waiting. Stanhope says that there was no change in Wellington's countenance ; but I prefer the evidence of the doctor, whose medical eye would be the more searching.

² The authority for this important detail will be found in Maxwell's *Peninsular Sketches*, i. 290. When visiting Badajoz I selected by conjecture this point as the likeliest for the escalade, and, with this confirmation, do not hesitate to assert the fact.

spot selected for the first escalade ; and Ridge and 1812. Canch with the grenadiers of the Fifth at their heels, April 6. gained the summit almost if not quite unresisted. The enemy was in fact surprised ; and the Fifth, after dispersing a small hostile party, groped its way in the dark along the ramparts, and found a passage into the centre of the Castle. Following this they came upon a column of French, which after the exchange of a few volleys gave way ; whereupon the regiment, leaving Ridge mortally wounded behind it, drove the retreating enemy from post to post until they finally chased them from the Castle. Here the pursuit was checked, for the French barricaded the outer gate by which they themselves had escaped, and though they had left the wicket open, they fired heavily on any who attempted to pass it. Picton¹ therefore withdrew his men within the inner gate and waited. Presently the march of troops was heard, and a voice demanded admission in English. Philippon had detached four companies of the 88th to recapture the Castle, and these, joining their comrades who had just been expelled from the stronghold, had arrived under a crafty leader to make the attempt. Picton, detecting the trick, opened the gate and received them with a volley and a charge, which effectually drove them back ; but the outer entrance again had been barricaded, and there no egress was possible from the Castle. Philippon in fact had made his preparations for holding this citadel in case the town should be captured ; and, with such resources as Picton had at hand, it was impracticable for him to break the barriers down. He therefore resolved to secure his position and await the coming of daylight, sending information to Wellington of his success.

This joyful intelligence appears to have reached the Commander-in-Chief a few minutes after the scene with Dr. M'Grigor which has been already narrated ; and so welcome was it that the staff gave way to a general cry of exultation. Wellington, however, without moving

¹ It seems impossible to determine if Picton were present or not ; some authorities saying that he was, others that he was not.

1812. a muscle of his face, merely gave orders for the Fourth April 6. and Light Divisions to be prepared to renew their attack in the morning. "The devil!" said Harry Smith, who was brigade-major of Barnard's brigade, on receiving this command, "why we have had enough; we are all knocked to pieces." Happily, as shall be seen, the two mangled divisions were to be subjected to no such trial.

While all this was passing Leith had been the victim of a galling misfortune. Originally his attack had been designed only as a feint, and only by much entreaty had he persuaded Wellington to give him a few ladders. The officer, whose duty it was to guide these ladders from the Engineers' park to the Fifth Division, lost his way; and it was past eleven o'clock before Leith could start for his appointed station. A little before midnight he reached the bastion of San Vincente, where the three battalions of Walker's brigade were selected to lead the way. While yet on the glacis they were discovered by the enemy, and greeted with a heavy fire; but they pushed on undismayed. First they had to beat down the palisade over the covered way, then to descend twelve feet from the summit of the counterscarp into the ditch, then to cross the ditch itself with its *cunette*, six feet wide and five feet deep, and finally to scale the wall of the scarp, of which the first twenty feet were perpendicular, and the next twelve feet so steeply inclined as to be barely possible of ascent. Notwithstanding a frontal fire of musketry and a flanking fire of artillery, Walker's soldiers triumphed over all obstacles and, in spite of many mishaps, succeeded, with the help of three or four ladders only, in driving the French from the summit and making good their own footing in the fortress.

Instantly reforming his brigade, Walker advanced southward along the ramparts, sending half of the Fourth regiment into the town to dislodge the enemy from some houses near the point of escalade. By hard fighting he mastered three bastions in succession; but

in the third he fell desperately wounded ; and the flame 1812. of a port-fire, added to the cry of " Mine," struck sudden April 6. panic into the brigade. They broke and turned ; and a party of French, charging them with the bayonet, drove them headlong back to San Vincente. Here, however, Leith had stationed his second brigade in reserve ; and the Thirty-eighth with one volley blasted the pursuing enemy into annihilation. The entire division then marched in two columns towards the breaches, its bugles sounding the advance in all directions. The detachment of the Fourth had found itself too weak to take the ramparts in reverse unaided, and had been driven back with some loss ; but, when Leith's bugles were answered by Picton's, the French resistance seems to have collapsed, except on the outworks, with singular suddenness. The troops at the breaches, wrote the leading engineer on the French side, broke their arms and abandoned themselves to their fate on hearing of the fall of the Castle ; and the remnant of the Fourth and Light Divisions entered the fortress unopposed. At one o'clock Philippon with such few men as he could collect crossed the bridge into San Christobal, whence he sent word to Soult by his cavalry of the fate of Badajoz. Five hours later at the summons of Lord Fitzroy Somerset he surrendered.

Then the assailants gave themselves up to an orgy of rape, drunkenness, and pillage. It seems certain that there were at least some officers of high rank who had promised their men the sack of the town ; and a soldier of the Third Division has recorded that, after the prisoners had been secured, he and his comrades were allowed to enter the streets for the purpose of plunder.¹ According to some accounts efforts were made in certain regiments to preserve order ; but, be that as it may, it is undeniable that for a time the British army in Badajoz was dissolved into a dangerous mob of intoxicated robbers. The soldiers sacked every house from cellar to garret ; they fired indiscriminately upon the locks

¹ Donaldson. *Eventful Life of a Soldier*, p. 246.

1812. of doors, upon the inhabitants and upon each other ; April 6. they threatened such officers as tried to restrain them ; and they are said even to have discharged vinous salutes with ball cartridge about the person of Wellington himself. As at Ciudad Rodrigo men were actually drowned in spirits, and many were killed or wounded while fighting for liquor or booty. Philippon himself with his two daughters only escaped outrage because they were escorted by two officers with drawn swords. Two Spanish ladies fled to the British camp to throw themselves on the chivalry of the officers, and happened by chance upon those of the Rifle Brigade. The younger of them, a girl of not more than fourteen, was so beautiful that every member of the mess appears to have fallen in love with her ; but she was won by Harry Smith, who married her upon the spot and was destined to carry her with him to every part of the British Empire. She died in 1872, twelve years after her husband, leaving no children, but perpetuating her name in a South African township, which since the year 1900 has found a place upon many regimental colours.

April 7. On the 7th Wellington issued an order that it was April 8. high time for the plunder to cease. On the 8th he sent in the Provost Marshal with strong picquets to put a stop to the disorder, and Power's Portuguese brigade to form the garrison of the town ; but the picquets were impotent, and the Portuguese proved themselves worse plunderers than those whom they were expected to

April 9. repress. On the 9th therefore Power's brigade was kept under arms all day, and a gallows was erected in the principal square, when the sight of a few men hanging by their necks was efficacious in driving the last of the stragglers back to the camp. It is useless to waste words in condemning the behaviour of the troops, already ten times condemned, or to point out that it was triply condemnable seeing that Badajoz was a city of friends. Shots were certainly fired at the Fourth Foot by Spaniards as they entered the town, and he would be a hard judge who would blame them for it.

Moreover, it is idle to blink the fact that the British much preferred the French to the Spaniards, and that April 6. the French looked upon the British as friends compared to either Spaniards or Portuguese. Nor would it be far from the truth to add that the Spaniards loathed all three nations with an impartial hatred. French soldiers actually guided the British to the quarters where money or liquor was to be found ; and it is probable that the bad characters of all four nations joined together heartily in barbarous maltreatment of the unhappy citizens. The only excuse for the men is that savage fighting had turned them all into wild beasts, and that few of them had seen either wine or wages for many weary weeks. Wellington's wrath was indescribable. "He fulminates orders," wrote Stanhope, "and will hardly thank the troops, so angry is he" ; but thunder as he might he could not stop the riot for three full days.

The twenty-one days of siege cost the Allies nearly five thousand killed and wounded, close upon four thousand of them being British and the rest Portuguese ; and of this number almost exactly three-quarters fell in the assault. Six generals were wounded, Picton, Walker, Colville, Kempt, and Bowes of the British Army, Harvey of the Portuguese ; and four battalion commanders were killed, Ridge of the Fifth, Gray of the Thirtieth, McLeod of the Forty-third, and O'Hare of the Rifles—all of them excellent officers, McLeod in particular, who was but twenty-seven years of age, being of remarkable promise. The Forty-third and Fifty-second were the regiments that had the most numerous casualties, the former losing three hundred and forty-seven, and the latter three hundred and twenty-three of all ranks killed and wounded ; while the Rifle Brigade came next to them with a loss of two hundred and fifty-eight. But these were all three of them strong battalions, and the regiment which really suffered most severely was the Fourth, of Leith's division ; for this battalion out of a total of at most five hundred and thirty of all ranks present lost two hundred and thirty

1812. killed and wounded. The five battalions of the Fourth April 6. Division also, as well as the Thirtieth and Forty-fourth of the Fifth Division, were punished quite as heavily, in proportion to their numbers, as was the Light Division. Speaking generally, it may be said that the men endured more than any one could have expected of them, and that their behaviour at the assault was beyond all praise. The Fourth and Light Divisions, though cooped up in a confined space under an appalling fire, tried again and again to achieve the impossible, undismayed by the terrible havoc wrought among them, and by the maddening circumstance that they were unable to touch their enemies. While the assailants before the breaches were swept away by hundreds, French writers claim—and there seems to be no reason to question their accuracy—that not twenty of the defenders were killed or hurt. Troops that will persist in fighting under conditions so disheartening must be animated by no common spirit.

It remains to consider whether this terrible slaughter could to any extent have been avoided or diminished. Wellington pleaded that the want of skilled workmen forbade him to follow the common rules of poliorcetics and to blow in the counterscarp, while the advance of Soult and the movements of Marmont rendered imperative an early capture of Badajoz at any cost. Both pleas must be admitted; and yet the fact remains that the assault upon the breaches, on which Wellington undoubtedly reckoned for success, was a failure so disastrous as to deserve characterisation as a blunder. The question then arises, Was the right quarter chosen in the first instance for the attack? Colonel Lamare, the senior French engineer in the place, afterwards averred—and the same view was commonly expressed by the garrison—that Wellington might have stormed Badajoz out of hand on the first night of the investment with less difficulty than he experienced after twenty-one days of siege. But this amounts only to an opinion that, if the Commander of the British had known as

much of the condition of the fortress and garrison as 1812. did the Commander of the French, he would have found April 6. his task greatly facilitated ; and such a proposition, though undeniable, cannot be treated as serious criticism. Of greater weight is the undoubted fact that both Philippon and Lamare considered the front next to the Castle as the weakest point in the defences, and that Burgoyne both before and after the siege maintained that, by opening a parallel four hundred yards from the Castle wall, the place might have been taken in eight or ten days.

But, assuming that the first parallels were opened at the most advantageous point, was it reasonable to hope that the fortress could be stormed after the fashion prescribed to the Fourth and Light Divisions ? Wellington was aware that the breaches had been retrenched ; and it is probable that at the moment of the assault they were the strongest part of the lines. But as a matter of fact, not a single British soldier passed the summit of the breaches, so that the strength of the retrenchment was never tested. How was this ? All who took part in the assault declared that the *chevaux de frise* of sword-blades moored fast to the ground made an impassable obstruction. The British engineers on the contrary declared that, having been erected after dark, these barriers could only have been attached to the earth by the extreme ends, and that consequently they could not have been firmly fixed and might have been swept away by the determined rush of any solid mass of men. These officers seem to have been unaware that the *chevaux de frise* had been first placed on the breaches on the night of the 4th, carefully removed at dawn, and replaced after dusk of every subsequent day ; so that the French workmen must have been expert in planting them rapidly and stably in position. To me, therefore, as to a far better judge, Napier, before me, this contention of the British engineers appears unsupportable. Whether these obstacles could have been blown to pieces by a continuous fire from the batteries,

1812, or by field-pieces, brought up to the glacis for the April 6. purpose with the storming party, is another question. All authorities agree that the British cannon were silent after four o'clock in the afternoon of the 6th ; and many maintain that this respite enabled Philippon to make his breaches impregnable. Upon the whole, it should seem that neither Wellington nor his engineers appreciated the resource which a brave, highly-trained, and energetic commander might bring to bear upon the maintenance of his defences.

As regards the assaults of the Third and Fifth Division, it appears that neither Picton nor Leith were originally intended to deliver more than feint attacks, and that it was owing to their personal remonstrances that they were empowered to attempt a serious escalade. For some reason the credit of the fall of the fortress is generally assigned to Picton, but as a matter of fact quite as much praise, if not more, is due to Leith and to his gallant Brigadier, Walker. It was Leith who took the town, though it was Picton who, by mastering the citadel, frustrated Philippon's plans for prolonging the defence. In the matter of time it is certain that Picton's success came before Leith's ; but the movements of the Third Division after they seized the Castle are exceedingly obscure. Sometimes Picton appears to be in command, sometimes Campbell. Sometimes all the gates of the Castle are so barricaded that the British cannot get out ; sometimes they fly open by magic, the French come in and are driven out again ; but the British never make an attempt to pursue them or to seize the gate, and the barriers once again are mysteriously closed. All that is certain is that the Third Division after mastering the Castle did not obey Wellington's orders to fall upon the rear of the defenders of the breach ; and that, in fact, its influence upon the issue of the assault was moral and not physical. There may have been good reasons for this ; for we know that Philippon had prepared the Castle for isolated

defence ; and in the darkness and confusion outlets 1812. must have been troublesome to find and troops difficult April 6. to keep together. Still, after making all allowances, the comparative apathy of the Third Division in the Castle is not easy to understand. In the matter of Leith's escalade, it seems clear that, but for the delay in bringing him his ladders, his attack would have weakened the defence at the breaches earlier and saved many hundreds of lives. That delay was due to carelessness, and that there should have been carelessness in respect of so important a matter is sufficient proof of the false calculations upon which the arrangements for the assault were founded.

But, after all has been said and all criticism has been passed, the storm of Badajoz remains and must always remain one of the great deeds of the British army, one of those actions that show forth above others the might and prowess of the British soldier. Only those perhaps who have walked, whether within or without, round the ramparts of the fortress, little changed after the lapse of a century can realise how terrible must have been that struggle on the night of the 6th of April. The breaches have been long since built up, and the traveller sees only green turf on that space of one hundred yards square which in 1812 was red with British corpses. But the grey walls of the Castle and of the bastion of San Vincente still loom up stern and forbidding ; and beneath them an Englishman may stand and picture, if he can, the wave of red-coats breaking against them under a hurricane of fire, leaping up in slender threads where the ladders were planted, falling back again shivered into spray, only to spring forward and leap up once more, and at the last to surge over the summit. And then he will marvel not less at the physical strength than at the desperate valour, which carried these soldiers over the wall. Their ladders were in most cases too short, and the stormers had to scramble up the masonry as best they could, hoisting each other

1812. upward from below, hauling each other upward from above by sheer muscular force, all under such a tempest of grape and musketry and bursting shells that a broken neck was the least of the risks to be run. Only once before, perhaps, in the history of the Army had British soldiers shown such utter contempt of death and such unconquerable resolution to master a hostile stronghold no matter at what cost ; and that was at Ticonderoga in 1758. On that occasion their gallantry and devotion were expended in vain ; at Badajoz they were seconded by a happier fortune, and victory was theirs, though at terrible cost. Small wonder that even the iron firmness of Wellington was broken down when he learned the number of the fallen, and that for the first time ever recorded of him he burst into a passion of tears.

Authorities.—The story of the siege of Badajoz is told on the French side in the narratives of Belmas and the pamphlet published by Colonel Lamare. On the English side for general purposes there are the accounts in Jones's *Sieges* ; in Wrottesley's *Life of Sir J. Burgoyne* ; in the Dickson MSS. ; and in the *Autobiography* of Sir J. M'Grigor. Beyond these there are for the Third Division, McCarthy's *Storm of Badajoz* ; Grattan's *Adventures in the Connaught Rangers* ; Donaldson's *Eventful Life of a Soldier* ; and two short accounts in Maxwell's *Peninsular Sketches*, vol. i. For the Fifth Division, the narratives in Leith, Hay, and the *Life of Sir W. Gomm* ; for the Light Division, Kincaid's *Random Shots*, and *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade* ; Costello ; Cooke ; *Autobiography* of Sir Harry Smith ; and Moorsom's *History of the 52nd*.

CHAPTER XIII

WELLINGTON's original idea, in the event of the fall ^{1812.} of Badajoz, had been to advance into Andalusia and drive Soult from that province; but the condition of Ciudad Rodrigo, thanks to Spanish procrastination and the advance of Marmont to the Coa, forbade him to indulge any such hope. It was a pity, for in the south matters were going well for the Allies. Soult's advanced guard had reached Villalba and Fuente del Maestre on the 7th, and his main body April 7. was actually on the march from Villafranca on the 8th, when tidings reached him from Philippon of the disaster that had befallen the French arms. Too weak in numbers to meet Wellington's army he fell back at once to Llerena, designing to retire still further towards Andalusia and choose a position where he could either offer battle, if the British should press him, or, in the contrary event, could recover the ground lost in the province.¹ Meanwhile he had heard that Penne-Villemur and Morillo from Niebla and Ballesteros from Ronda were closing in upon Seville and had actually severed its communications with La Mancha, Granada, and Malaga. He therefore at once detached his brother's division of cavalry, two brigades of infantry, and the bulk of his artillery to cross the Guadalquivir at Lora del Rio; at the same time sending a brigade of dragoons, together with another of infantry, by a more direct route to Seville, in the hope of surprising the enemy before

¹ Soult to Berthier, 8th April 1812. Ducasse, viii. 351.

1812. the city. On the 9th, however, the Spaniards received April. warning of what was coming and withdrew, Penne Villemur and Morillo for Estremadura by Wellington's orders, and Ballesteros south-eastward upon Setenil de las Bodegas, whence he sent detachments to assail two French posts to the north, both of which attacks were beaten off with some loss on either side. Then suddenly hearing that General Rey lay isolated with three battalions twenty-five miles to eastward at Alora,

April 14. Ballesteros fell upon him by surprise on the 14th, and drove him back to Malaga with a loss of over one hundred men and two guns. The town of Malaga was in a high state of excitement, which might have proved fatal to Rey had not Maransin and Pierre Soult hastened to aid their comrade. Thereupon the Spanish Commander retired once more to the mountains of Ronda.

Soult meanwhile had hurried to Seville, which he April 11. reached on the 11th; and d'Erlon was left with his own and Darricau's divisions of infantry and a division of dragoons at Llerena to screen the Marshal's movements and observe those of the enemy. Wellington had every wish to impress his adversary with the idea that he meant to invade Andalusia; and accordingly Ponsonby's¹ brigade of Light Dragoons was pushed forward upon the heels of the retreating French, with the brigades of Le Marchant and Slade in support, the whole being under the command of Cotton.² Graham received orders to bespeak rations for forty thousand men at Zafra and to spread reports everywhere of Wellington's coming; for a false rumour that Ballesteros had captured Seville had sent the whole country into transports of delight and even Graham nourished hopes that an energetic demonstration might April 10. compel the raising of the siege of Cadiz. On the 10th,

¹ Formerly Anson's; but Anson was at home on leave.

² Slade's Brigade: Royals; 3rd and 4th D.G. Le Marchant's: 3rd and 4th D.; 5th D.G. Ponsonby's (late Anson's): 12th, 14th, 16th L.D.

therefore, the brigades of Slade and Ponsonby being at 1812. Villafranca and Ribera and that of Le Marchant at Los April 10. Santos, Cotton rode out to Bienvenida, and, mounting the steeple of the church, ascertained that d'Erlon still occupied Llerena in force, having a strong body of cavalry bivouacked in a wood at Villagarcia some four miles in rear, that is to say to northward, of Llerena. After careful reconnaissance he directed Ponsonby to move forthwith on Usagre with the Twelfth and Fourteenth, and made arrangements for the concentration of all three brigades at Bienvenida one hour before day-break of the Morrow. Ere night, however, Cotton learned that the French had evacuated Villagarcia ; whereupon, much troubled lest the enemy should escape him, he ordered Ponsonby to push two squadrons into the village next morning, and to send out patrols from thence to look for the French towards Berlanga, on the road to Cordova.

The two heavy brigades and the Sixteenth Light Dragoons were punctually assembled at Bienvenida before dawn of the 11th ; and it then occurred to April 11. Cotton that, by deferring the advance of Ponsonby until Le Marchant's brigade should have had time to move round the enemy's rear, he might cut off the French cavalry from Llerena, and annihilate it. He sent an aide-de-camp to Ponsonby with instructions not to march until further orders, but too late ; for Ponsonby's advanced squadrons had already driven in the French picquets from the hill before Villagarcia. Pushing back the enemy through the village, these squadrons came upon the main body of the French horse in the plain beyond, and were promptly chased in turn ; whereupon Cotton sent Ponsonby forward again with the remainder of the Twelfth and Fourteenth, making six squadrons in all, to skirmish with the enemy in front, while he prepared a movement against their flank. The French general, Lallemand, unable to see more troops than Ponsonby's six hundred sabres, joyfully fell into the trap ; and, while he was

1812. manœuvring against them, the Sixteenth rode forward April 11. to form on Ponsonby's right ; Le Marchant's brigade passing over the hill still further to the right so as to come down unperceived upon Lallemand's left flank. As the reinforcements topped the rising ground, they perceived the Twelfth and Fourteenth on the plain retiring into a narrow defile between some stone walls, with Lallemand's horsemen about a quarter of a mile beyond them briskly advancing. The Sixteenth inclined to their left to join Ponsonby, who had faced his brigade about ; but before they could attack, the Fifth Dragoon Guards came galloping up in single file across a ravine upon the left flank of the French, and, hastily reforming in a grove of olives, delivered their charge.

With horses weary after a long march and blown by a rapid movement over fully four miles of ground, the first onslaught of the Fifth was fruitless. The French, much superior in numbers, appear to have received them at the halt and to have beaten them back by the fire of carbines and pistols from the saddle. But the Fifth speedily rallied for a second charge ; and now, to the amazement of Lallemand, who had counted upon a low stone wall to protect his front, the Sixteenth came trotting steadily down the hill, broke into a gallop at its foot, leaped the wall in line, and crashed straight into his ranks from the north, just as the Fifth sprang upon them from the west. Utterly broken the French turned and fled with the British in pursuit ; but Cotton presently halted his men to restore their formation ; and Lallemand seized the opportunity to rally his troopers in rear of a wide ditch about two miles on the road to Llerena. Cotton thereupon detached two squadrons of the Sixteenth to turn the enemy's left, and charging their front with the Twelfth for the second time dashed them into headlong flight. After this charge the pursuit was not checked until the British dragoons actually entered Llerena, when a few round shot from the French artillery which, with the whole of d'Erlon's infantry, was drawn up on the hill

beyond the town, warned Cotton to retire. The loss of the French in prisoners alone amounted to four officers and one hundred and twenty-four men, so that their casualties altogether can hardly have fallen below two hundred. Those of the British did not exceed fifty-eight killed, wounded, and missing, forty of whom belonged to the Fifth Dragoon Guards, and the remainder to the three regiments of Light Dragoons; the Fourth Dragoons having but one man wounded, and the Third and Slade's brigade no losses at all. Altogether it was a brilliant little affair, though less effective than it should have been. Cotton unjustly blamed Ponsonby for having marred a plan which was not communicated to him until too late; and experienced officers judged that Cotton himself was wrong to check the pursuit after the first charge, when the enemy, being in hopeless confusion, might have been far more heavily punished. But, it should seem that Wellington's scathing rebuke of the Thirteenth Light Dragoons after the affair of Campo Maior had made all his cavalry officers somewhat nervous about following up a success.¹

After the action d'Erlon retired with all his troops on the road to Cordova, whence Soult summoned him to join the main army. For the Marshal still expected Wellington to invade Andalusia, though he could hardly believe that the British Commander would commit the mistake of entangling his army in the Sierra Morena. Wellington, however, was for the present fully occupied with the movements of Marmont, who, as we have seen, had advanced upon Ciudad Rodrigo at the end of March with some twenty-six thousand men, carrying with him fifteen days' supplies,

¹ For this affair see Tomkinson, pp. 149-153; *Memoirs of Viscount Combermere*, i. 247-251; Cannon's *Records of the 5th D.G.*, and *Memoirs of a Dragoon*, a MS. kindly sent to me by an officer of the 5th D.G. I have failed to find any French account, d'Erlon's report (*see* Ducasse, viii. 400) having gone astray. The French regiments engaged were the 2nd Hussars, 17th and 27th Dragoons. They lost, by Martinien's lists, three officers killed and wounded.

1812. scaling ladders, and the material for making a bridge.

March. Pursuant to Wellington's orders Trant and Wilson had some days earlier marched down with some six thousand militia to Lamego, so as to be ready to protect the magazines of the Allies on the Douro and Mondego ; and Silveira with as many more was advancing slowly towards the same quarter. But Wellington's directions had been drawn up on the assumption that both Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo were proof against a sudden attack ; and that Marmont, if faced by a respectable body of militia, would not venture to cross the Coa leaving these two strong places behind him. Herein the British General was deceived. The defences of Almeida were still so far from complete that the Governor, Colonel Le Mesurier, in justifiable anxiety begged Trant to come to his assistance. Meanwhile on the March 30. 30th the French approached Ciudad Rodrigo, and on the following day reached the Agueda, when Marmont summoned the fortress, but, after throwing a few shells into it, and making some menace of an escalade, decided to leave a force to blockade it and to pass on.

But now happened an incident which Wellington could hardly have foreseen. Victor Alten, to whom together with the 1st German Hussars he had entrusted the delicate task of maintaining contact with Marmont's army and delaying its advance as much as possible, suddenly lost his head. Though the Agueda was passable at one ford April 1. only, Alten on the 1st of April deliberately abandoned that ford to two squadrons of French cavalry, and, retreating by rapid marches through Sabugal and Pedrogão, reached Castello Branco on the 6th of April. Carlos d'Espana, having only eight hundred infantry over and above the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo, fell back at the same time to Fort Concepcion ; but Marmont, having laid his bridge over the Agueda on the 3rd, pushed him out of this position and compelled him to retire upon Almeida. Near this place fortunately d'Espana ran into the arms of Trant, who had hurried down with a brigade of militia to the assistance of Le Mesurier ;

and Trant, dressing up some guides in scarlet coats, 1812. galloped with them to the fortress, whence, after a April conference with the Governor, he withdrew a troop of British cavalry which happened to be within the walls. As night fell, he multiplied the fires about his bivouac, so as to give the impression that a large force was present ; and Le Mesurier, making a sortie, drove in the French light infantry that encompassed him. As a matter of fact Marmont had despatched two divisions to storm Almeida without more ado ; but the officer in command of this detachment, judging from all appearances that British troops were approaching, thought his position unsafe and moved up the Coa next morning to rejoin the Marshal. Trant therefore sent back the troop of British cavalry to Le Mesurier, and proceeded towards Guarda to protect the magazines and hospital at Celorico.

Meanwhile Marmont, leaving one division to blockade Ciudad Rodrigo, had marched by Fuente Guinaldo for Alfaiates, where the two divisions from Almeida rejoined him, and thence pushed southward by Sabugal and Penamacor upon Castello Branco. While he was still from forty to fifty miles distant, Victor Alten again took the alarm ; and, leaving Castello Branco on the 8th, he crossed the Tagus, in direct contradiction to Wellington's orders, on the following day at Villa Velha, April 9. and actually suggested the destruction of the bridge. Happily the Portuguese Colonel Le Cor, who was in command at Castello Branco, kept his wits about him. Driving back the advanced parties of the French, he withdrew the hospital and great part of the stores, and stood firm, until on the 12th he was compelled by an April 12. overwhelming force to evacuate the place. Le Cor then destroyed such stores as had not been removed, and retired, not as had Alten to the other side of the Tagus, but a short seven miles along the road towards the river. He judged rightly, for on the morrow April 13. Marmont, having arrived at the fifteenth day since his departure from Salamanca, found himself in distress for

1812. supplies and began his retreat, scattering his troops far April. and wide to search for provisions. Trant, who since his arrival at Guarda had been joined by Wilson, now formed the bold project of surprising the Marshal in his quarters at Sabugal, but was obliged to abandon it. This was no misfortune, for Marmont had conceived the idea of surprising Trant at Guarda on the very same night, and indeed would have succeeded had he not been scared away by an accidental beating of drums. Trant therefore fell back; his militia, though raw levies, preserving good order in the face of the French cavalry, until the force began to cross the Mondego. At this point, however, the rear-guard, being hardly pressed and finding its cartridges useless owing to the pouring rain, took to its heels and carried panic and confusion into the main body, which none the less contrived ultimately to pass the river, though with considerable loss in prisoners, and to reach Celorico.¹ Here General Bacellar, who had now taken command, destroyed a quantity of powder and withdrew with Trant's people to Lamego. Wilson, on the other hand, remained at Celorico until his outposts were driven in by the enemy, when he gave orders for the magazines there to be destroyed; but this work had not been completed when the French retired, having news of the approach of a more formidable enemy.

Immediately upon ascertaining the retreat of Soult April 11. from Llerena, Wellington began on the 11th to set his army in motion for the north, taking first the precaution of sending Major Burgoyne to Villa Velha with orders to move the bridge of boats to a safe place, as soon as Marmont should reach Castello Branco. Victor Alten was also directed, not without rebuke, to recross April 16. the Tagus and return towards that place. On the 16th

¹ Napier, doubtless following Trant, gives the number of the Portuguese prisoners at 200; Marmont states that they numbered 1500, that 5 colours were captured with them, and that 3000 men threw down their arms and ran. Napier adds that Marmont would not let his cavalry cut down the unhappy peasants, and that not a man was killed in the action.

the Light Division, forming the advanced guard of the army, entered Castello Branco, by which time Marmont had concentrated the whole of his force, excepting the division left before Ciudad Rodrigo, between Sabugal and Penamacor. Heavy rains had flooded the Coa and the Agueda behind him, and had carried away his bridges over the latter river, which rendered his position far from comfortable ; for now his only way of retreat was by the head-waters of the Agueda, and, while he was taking this circuitous route, Wellington might pass the bridge of Ciudad Rodrigo with superior numbers and cut him off from Salamanca. He was, however, unaware of his danger, judging that the Allies were in no great strength in his front. Moreover, the weather affected the movements of the British as much as those of the French. Wellington was unwilling to allow his troops to bivouac in the incessant rain, and there was not space in the cantonments to north of the Tagus to shelter more than one division at a time. He therefore abandoned any idea of a rapid advance in force, and brought the rear divisions across the Tagus one at a time, frequently halting those in the front to accommodate this movement. Thus it was that on the 19th the Light Division was still but eight miles beyond Castello Branco, and the Third Division in line with it a little to the westward. On that day fugitive Portuguese militiamen brought in wild rumours that Trant had suffered a disaster at Guarda, which news was shortly afterwards corrected by a true report of his reverse from Trant himself. Meanwhile Marmont had begun to retire ; and on the 20th the outposts of the Light Division were at Penamacor. On the 22nd the British patrols entered Alfaiates and ascertained that the enemy had left it on the same morning, pointing eastward for the head-waters of the Agueda and the bridge of El Villar. The leading divisions of the French had as a matter of fact already begun the passage of the river at those points ; but in the course of the next day their bridge above

1812. Ciudad Rodrigo was repaired in time for the rear divisions to use it. By the 24th Wellington, being satisfied that Marmont was in full retreat for the Tormes, halted the whole army ; and on the following day the Marshal re-entered Salamanca. So ended with brilliant triumph for the British Commander the spring campaign of 1812.¹

That the disasters of the French were due to Napoleon's perseverance in attempting to direct from Paris the operations in Spain, there can I think be no doubt, in spite of Napier's unconvincing declamation to the contrary. Orders which cannot reach commanders in the field until the conditions which they are designed to meet have ceased for three weeks to exist, must inevitably work mischief, were they issued by a hundred Napoleons. Napier defends the Emperor's plan of weakening Marmont's army in order to strengthen Suchet's, on the ground that Valencia was the most important point at the moment, and therefore that upon which the main strength of the French should have been concentrated. But was Valencia the most important point at that or at any other moment after Wellington landed in 1809 ? Never. Wherever the British army might be, there was the heart of the struggle in the Peninsula ; and Napoleon was far too great a man to be unaware of it. But he had entangled himself in designs beyond full comprehension even by his gigantic intellect, and, being unable to make them square with existing facts, he sought to overcome the difficulty by substituting for facts such fiction as would best square with his designs. And herein his greatest error lay, perhaps, less in the ascription of imaginary weakness to his enemy's force and of imaginary strength to his own, than in his assumption that war would everywhere support war. We have seen that in his sober moments he awoke to the fallacy of this postu-

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Graham, 18th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 24th April ; to Liverpool, 24th April ; to Alten, 18th April 1812. Ducasse. *Mém. du Roi Joseph*, viii. 404-410.

late, so far at any rate as Portugal was concerned ; but 1812. he suffered himself to be deceived by it once more whenever the truth proved inconvenient. This was, after all, the system upon which the wars of the French Revolution at large had been carried out ; and his own surpassing success in the field had been due chiefly to masterly reassembling of hosts, previously scattered for purposes of subsistence, upon the field of decisive combat. But, after the desolation wrought by four years of waste and warring in most parts of the Peninsula, concentration had become impossible without magazines, and advance in force impossible without means of transport. Wellington being aware of this took his measures accordingly, and was lord of the situation, for the simple reason that he could move and his enemy could not.

So much for the broad causes which brought about the early mishaps to the French arms in 1812. As to the minor details outside the scope of Napoleon's orders, it is unprofitable to discuss whether the responsibility for the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo should be fastened upon Dorsenne, owing to the weakness of the garrison and the inefficiency of the Governor whom he had installed in the place ; or upon Joseph, who, according to Marmont's statement, squandered provisions which should have filled magazines for the Army of Portugal and enabled it to take the field earlier. Beyond all question the storming of the fortress after twelve days of siege took every French general in Spain by surprise, and would probably have been equally unforeseen by Napoleon had he been in the country. It was a stroke after the Great Captain's own heart, swift, sudden, defiant of all rules, boldly sacrificing men in lieu of time. The loss of Badajoz stands in a different category. This misfortune undoubtedly would have been averted if Marmont and Soult had been left free to combine their operations without the Emperor's interference. But it is idle to contend with Napier that, if Marmont had followed Napoleon's orders, the disaster would not have

1812. occurred ; for those orders presupposed either that the Marshal had supplies and transport—which he had not—or that the country over which he had to advance was not a desert—which it was. Nevertheless it must be conceded that Marmont, to use Wellington's phrase, made but a feeble effort ; and it is perfectly true that he disliked the advance into Beira, expected no good from it, and was not displeased when that expectation was realised. It is very probable that a bold assault upon either Ciudad Rodrigo or Almeida might have succeeded ; but Marmont could not divine that neither fortress was in a condition to offer a stout resistance, any more than Wellington could have guessed that Badajoz might have been easily stormed on the first day of investment. It is not true that, as Napier asserts, Marmont had at this crisis sixty thousand fighting men present with the eagles. He had only fifty-two thousand,¹ of whom fifteen thousand were required for Asturias, for garrisons and for the security of the lines of communication.

April. Upon arrival at Salamanca Marmont again put his troops into cantonments, keeping them as closely assembled as difficulties of subsistence would permit. Foy's division was in the valley of the Tagus ; Clausel's at Avila ; Ferey's at Valladolid and on the Douro ; Sarrut's at Toro ; Maucune's at Salamanca ; Brenier's at Medina del Campo ; Thomières's at Zamora ; Bonnet's in Asturias ; the light cavalry division between the Tormes and the Douro ; and the division of dragoons at Rio Seco. By this arrangement Marmont reckoned that the entire force, excepting the divisions of Foy and Bonnet, could be concentrated at Salamanca within five days. Soult likewise cantoned his army, keeping his head-quarters at Seville, and d'Erlon's division in the district of La Serena, with its right flank resting on the Guadiana at

¹ Returns of 15th April 1812 in *Archives de la Guerre*. Where Napier finds his returns of the same date in the Appendix to his 4th volume I do not know. Neither these figures nor those of 1st Oct. 1811 agree with those which I transcribed in detail with my own hand in Paris.

Villanueva. He was still wholly impotent from want of provisions for his army.

Wellington followed the example of his enemies, dispersing his army over an immense front from São João da Pesqueira on the Douro in the north almost to the Sierra Morena in the south ; his head-quarters from the 25th of April onwards being fixed at Fuente Guinaldo. The troops were drawn back as close to their magazines as possible, so that the transport of the army might be devoted wholly to the replenishing of the magazines and strong places with supplies. The disposition was, of course, vicious, and, as Wellington said, not such as could have been attempted in any other war ; but it was excused, first, by absolute necessity, and, secondly, by the extreme improbability that the French would ever find out anything about it. It seemed now more than ever hopeless to count upon the Spaniards for any concerted operation, even for one so simple as the victualling of a fortress. Wellington had relied on Abadia to make some diversion in Galicia during his absence before Badajoz ; but nothing appreciable had been done. He had definitely ordered Carlos d'Espana to break down the bridge on the Agueda if pressed back by the French ; but the Spanish General had omitted to obey, and through this neglect Marmont had gained two days on his march into Beira. The advantage of these two days, heightened as it was by the misconduct of Victor Alten, had led to the evacuation of Castello Branco and the destruction of the magazines there, which now of course must be refilled. Finally d'Espana's slackness in repairing and revictualling Ciudad Rodrigo proved to be part of a general design of the Spanish Government to make the British supply the garrisons and take responsibility for the safety both of that place and of Badajoz. Wellington firmly declined to spare a single man, British or Portuguese, for either stronghold, and clinched the matter by warning the Spanish Government that, unless they took suitable measures to furnish and maintain proper garrisons for these two fortresses,

1812. he would destroy them both. Yet even so it was not until the 9th of May that he heard that a regiment had at last arrived at Ayamonte to form part of the garrison of Badajoz.¹

In the midst of these cares, however, there was still one project which he now thought ripe for execution, namely, the destruction of the French bridge and bridge-head at Almaraz, which he had prescribed to Hill so long ago as in January but had then been compelled to abandon. The enterprise was now the more desirable inasmuch as Soult's pontoon-train had been captured in Badajoz, so that to all intent the boat-bridge laid down by Marmont at Almaraz furnished the only communication between the French armies north and south of the Tagus between Toledo and the Portuguese frontier. On the 30th of April warning was sent to Hill that this operation would shortly be expected of him;² and on

May 4. the 4th of May Wellington ordered the First and Sixth divisions under Graham to Portalegre to avert any possible dash of the enemy upon Badajoz. On the

May 12. 12th of May Sir Rowland marched with Howard's brigade of infantry, part of Wilson's brigade, Ashworth's Portuguese brigade,³ and the Thirteenth Light Dragoons, in all some six thousand men, leaving the rest of his division under the command of Sir William Erskine at Almendralejo. On the same day he was met at Merida by two companies of artillery, British and Portuguese, from Elvas, with six heavy cannon and three field-pieces, and by a party of engineers with a train of

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To H. Wellesley, 3rd May; to Graham, 4th May; to Colonel Austen, 9th May 1812.

² Mr. Oman conjectures that an intercepted letter of Marmont to Jourdan, dated 30th April, prompted Wellington to press this operation at this moment, but the date seems to vitiate this conjecture. Unfortunately none of Wellington's papers bear the date of their receipt, so that certainty upon this point is impossible.

³ *Howard's Brigade*: 50th, 71st, 92nd, 1 co. 5/60th.

Wilson's " : 28th, 34th, 1 co. 5/60th.

Ashworth's " : 6th and 18th Portuguese inf.; 6th Caçadores
(5 batts.).

pontoons. Crossing the Guadiana at Merida, where 1812. the bridge had been repaired by the British engineers, he entered Truxillo on the 15th, and, dropping all May 15. baggage at that place, proceeded next day to the May 16. foot of the Sierra de Mirabete near Jaraicejo. Soult, having early tidings of his advance from d'Erlon, and being positively informed by his officers that most of Wellington's troops—and in particular Wellington himself—had returned to Elvas, made up his mind that the long-threatened invasion of Andalusia was coming at last. Reckoning that he would be inferior to his enemy by twenty thousand men, and that Ballesteros would move out from the mountains of San Roque immediately his back was turned, Soult became seriously alarmed, and appealed to Joseph that he should send reinforcements to the Army of the South, and should give orders to Marmont to manœuvre in the valley of the Tagus against Wellington's left flank. On the 16th d'Erlon reported May 16. that Hill was advancing with fifteen to eighteen thousand men and eighteen guns upon Miajadas, pointing for Almaraz; from which Soult inferred that, as soon as Sir Rowland had mastered the bridge at that point, Wellington would come down with all his force upon the Army of the South. The Marshal felt confident, however, that Marmont would have marched with all his troops for the Tagus, as he ought, in Soult's opinion, to have done long ago, so that he had some hope of a decisive battle which would settle the fate of Spain for ever. These speculations form an instructive commentary upon Wellington's assurance in scattering his army along a front of nearly two hundred miles.¹

The fortifications constructed by Marmont for defence of the bridge of boats at Almaraz were formidable. On the north bank of the river stood Fort Ragusa, a pentagonal work containing a magazine of supplies and stores, which though unfinished was exceedingly strong, having in its centre a kind of citadel in the form of a loop-holed stone tower, twenty-five feet high, and being

¹ *Arch. de la Guerre.* Soult to Joseph, 15th, 19th May 1812.

1812. flanked by a field-work near the bridge. On the south May 16. bank was the bridge-head itself, revetted with masonry; and upon a height overlooking it was Fort Napoleon, a redoubt constructed for four hundred and fifty men, of which the ditch was deep, but with a scarp which rose by two steps instead of sheer to the summit, and consequently was not difficult of ascent. The rear of the redoubt was strongly retrenched, with a palisaded ditch and a loop-holed tower, as in Fort Ragusa, for citadel, so that this inner fortification was still capable of resistance after the outer enclosure had been captured. The principal approach to the bridge by the main road from Truxillo had likewise been placed in a state of defence. About six miles south of the bridge this road climbs the Sierra de Mirabete, a range so rugged that wheeled vehicles cannot move except on the highway; and at the summit of the pass the French had surrounded an old castle with a rampart twelve feet high, and had mounted seven or eight guns within it. Beyond this again were two small works connecting the tower with a large house close to the road, which the French had likewise fortified, so that the whole formed a strong line of defence across the pass. There was another pass, that of La Cueva, two to three miles to east of Mirabete, with a fair road up the southern slope, which degenerated into a mere goat's path as it descended upon the village of Roman-gordo on its way to Almaraz. The problem set to Hill was to overcome all these difficulties and to destroy the bridge.

Having halted near Jaraicejo till the evening of the 16th, he marched off at nightfall in three columns. The left or westernmost of these three, consisting of the Twenty-eighth, Thirty-fourth, and the 6th Caçadores under General Chowne,¹ was to carry the castle of Mirabete; the centre column, made up of the two remaining Portuguese regiments and all the artillery, was to follow the main road and attack the defences of the pass; and the right column, Howard's brigade under command

¹ Formerly Tilson.

of Hill himself, was to bear eastward and descend 1812. by the pass of La Cueva upon Almaraz. The first and May 16. last of these columns were both of them provided with scaling-ladders, axes and petards, and it was hoped that they would reach their destination before dawn. This hope was frustrated. So long and difficult were the roads that the coming of day found all three of the columns still far from their striking points ; and Hill realised that all idea of a surprise must be abandoned.

Throughout the 17th and 18th Sir Rowland sought May 17. in vain for some other passage by which he could bring his artillery down to Almaraz, for the castle and its dependent works were situated upon a hill so precipitous that it was hopeless to think of taking them by storm. Then, finding that the garrisons were still quiet and unsuspicious, he decided to leave his guns on the mountain for a false attack on the castle, and attempt to escalade Fort Napoleon and the bridge-head with his infantry only. Accordingly at nine o'clock on the evening of the 18th Howard's brigade, reinforced by May 18. the Caçadores and a single company of the Sixtieth, began their march over the pass of La Cueva, carrying their ladders, now shortened to sixteen feet, with them. The head of the column halted before dawn behind May 19. some heights half a mile from Fort Napoleon ; but such were the difficulties of the road that the men were scattered over the hill like sheep, and the rear did not close up until eight o'clock. Meanwhile as soon as it was light Chowne, according to preconcerted arrangements, had opened a cannonade at long range upon the castle of Mirabete ; and the entire garrison of Fort Napoleon was crowded on the parapet watching the proceedings with no apparent suspicion of any nearer danger. Yet the French had had warning of the approach of the British ; and Major Aubert, who was in command, had strengthened the garrison of the fort and taken up two of the centre boats of the bridge. Hence when the Fiftieth and a wing of the Seventy-first suddenly sprang into sight and came rushing over the plain, the

1812. enemy was ready for them, and the guns of Fort May 19. Ragusa and the musketry of Fort Napoleon made havoc in their ranks. Undismayed, the assailants in three several columns flew upon their prey, and leaping into the ditch found their ladders too short for the escalade. Under a shower of missiles of every description they spliced two ladders together ; scrambled up the first step of the scarp, which by chance was unduly broad, pulled their ladders after them, ran up to the rampart and closed hand to hand with the garrison. Aubert was wounded ; the French gave way before stress of numbers ; and the whole struggling mass of assailants and defenders surged into the retrenchment. The enemy, now panic-stricken, made no attempt to defend the tower, but fled to the bridge-head. Yet here also their pursuers were as quick as they, and driving them from this stronghold as well, hunted them on even to the gap in the bridge and so to a watery death. For a few minutes Fort Ragusa opened fire upon Fort Napoleon ; but the British gunners speedily answered with the captured cannon ; and the garrison on the other side of the river, catching the infection of panic, streamed hurriedly out of the entrenchments and retreated in disorder upon Naval Moral. The whole affair had lasted little more than forty minutes.

Immediately after the evacuation of Fort Ragusa some men of the Ninety-second swam the river, and brought back boats for the repair of the bridge, which enabled that work to be occupied forthwith. The fortifications were abundantly furnished with supplies ; and Hill's soldiers, who for three days had received only double allowance of beef in lieu of bread, feasted sumptuously upon every kind of delicacy washed down with abundance of wine. The towers and magazines were then blown up, a German officer of artillery unfortunately perishing in the explosion through some accident ; and, the troops having recrossed the river from Fort Ragusa, the bridge was hauled over to the

southern bank and burned. The store-houses were 1812. likewise set on fire, and, before night fell, the force retired to the pass of La Cueva, leaving only a small party to complete the work of destruction, which was accomplished on the following day. Two hundred and May 20. fifty-nine prisoners were taken; and the total loss of the French can hardly have fallen below four hundred. That of the assailants amounted to thirty-three killed and one hundred and forty-four wounded, twenty-eight of the killed and one hundred and ten of the wounded belonging to the Fiftieth Regiment alone. The whole enterprise was brilliant in the audacity alike of its conception and of its execution, and highly creditable both to the troops and to Hill.¹

Sir Rowland now prepared to reduce the works of Mirabete with his heavy guns, there being to all appearance nothing that could hinder him. Foy, warned of the danger of Almaraz on the night of the 17th, had ordered General Chemineau to march thither in all haste with the 6th Light; but that officer, meeting the fugitives as he was leaving Naval Moral on the evening of the 19th, took fright and fell back to Oropesa. Soult, again, was so convinced that he would shortly be attacked by Wellington in force that he could think of nothing else. But d'Erlon, acting upon his own responsibility, had pushed in the British outposts at Medellin and Robera on the 17th and 18th; and Erskine, losing his head, cried out that Soult's entire army was upon him. Graham thereupon marched his two divisions into Badajoz; Hill, fearful of being cut off, on the 21st retired to Truxillo; and the works of May 21. Mirabete were left unmolested. Marmont moved Clausel's division to the Tagus to enable Foy to relieve the garrison at the Castle, which that officer duly did on the 23rd. Thus this isolated post, which, if Erskine

¹ Narratives of the affair of Almaraz will be found in Hill's despatch (*Wellington Desp.*, ed. 1852, v. 678-679); in Jones's *Sieges*, i. 245; in *Adventures of Capt. Patterson*, pp. 193 sq.; and in *Journal of a Soldier of the 71st*, pp. 152 sq.

1812. had not given way to groundless panic, should in Wellington's view have been swept away with loss to the enemy, was left intact. The Commander-in-Chief was intensely annoyed. "Notwithstanding all that has passed," he wrote, "I cannot prevail upon the General officers to feel a little confidence in their situations. They take alarm at the least movement of the enemy; and then spread the alarm and interrupt everything." It is not surprising that Erskine's timidity, following immediately upon that of Victor Alten, should have drawn from Wellington this scathing criticism.¹

Still the bridge had been destroyed, and thereby the communication between the Armies of Portugal and of the South had been thrust back to the bridge of Toledo—a pretty stroke to finish off the work that had been begun at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz. It may be imagined that the French commanders were profoundly affected by this succession of misfortunes; but they were helpless against them. "I know," wrote Foy, "that in case of an attack by the enemy the place for my division is in the vicinity of Almaraz. But how can I move my troops in a desert, when for several days they have not received even half a ration of bread, and when the prospect of seeing bread come to us grows more remote?" The complaints of Marmont and Soult were precisely the same. Their men were in the greatest distress for victuals, and could only be kept alive by dispersion over a wide area until harvest should come. Meanwhile Wellington, having both supplies and transport, could march about the country and work mischief practically without hindrance. He had triumphed, in fact, less by the art of war than by the science of organisation; and he had every intention of pushing the system further. The possession of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz enabled him, though his main source of

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 28th May. *Archives de la Guerre.* Soult to Joseph, 26th May; Girod de l'Ain, *Vie du Général Foy*, 160-164.

supply was still the sea, to push his advanced bases forward to the Portuguese frontier; and, since he could not spare his transport always to fill the magazines at these bases, he decided to facilitate communications by improving the navigation of the Douro and the Tagus. After many difficulties the channel of the former was opened as far as the Spanish frontier at Barca d'Alva, and of the latter as far as Alcantara; and, one hundred miles of dreary hauling over bad roads being thus avoided, supplies and stores were brought through Portugal to Spain at an immense saving of labour and expense.

This most important work Wellington supplemented by another, purely military rather than administrative, for shortening the line of communication between his own corps and Hill's by the restoration of the damaged bridge of Alcantara. The height of the bridge being fifty yards and the width of the gap thirty yards, the task was one of great difficulty; but all obstacles were overcome by the ingenuity of Major Sturgeon of the Royal Staff Corps.¹ This very remarkable officer, of whom we shall see more, conceived the idea—hitherto unknown in Europe, though long converted into practice in the East—of stretching cables across the chasm, and laying upon them a network of stout ropes, strong enough to bear the weight even of heavy cannon. In other words he improvised the first suspension-bridge ever seen in Europe out of materials found in the fortress of Elvas. The whole of these materials were transported in sections to Alcantara in seventeen carts, before any one could guess at their significance, and were there put together under his direction, with perfect success. Thus the long march to Villa Velha was avoided and the distance from Estremadura to Beira shortened by the best part of one hundred miles.

With these facilities and with Ciudad Rodrigo and

¹ I may repeat here that the Royal Staff Corps were the Engineers of the Commander-in-Chief, as distinct from the Royal Engineers, who were the Engineers of the Master of the Ordnance.

1812. Badajoz at his back, Wellington could choose for himself whether he should move against Salamanca in the north, against Madrid in the centre, or against Seville in the south; and could keep his enemies in doubt to the last moment as to the line that he should select. But before following him through the campaign of the summer of 1812, it is necessary to take note of affairs in other parts of Europe, and in other quarters of the Peninsula.

CHAPTER XIV

ON the 9th of May Napoleon left Paris for Dresden, 1812. the first stage of the journey which was to end at Moscow. A general account has already been given of the arrangements which he had made for the prosecution of his affairs in Spain during his absence, and in particular of the committal of the chief command to his brother Joseph ; and, since his orders had by the end of April had time to take effect, it will be convenient at this point to examine them in closer detail.

First, as to the reorganisation of the armies, all Polish troops and the greater part of the Imperial Guard were, as we have seen, withdrawn from the Peninsula for service in the Russian campaign ; and the remainder were re-grouped as follows :

The Army of Aragon was reconstituted as the Third Corps or Army of Valencia, and was reduced to three divisions of infantry—those of Musnier, Harispe, and Habert—together with Boussard's brigade of cavalry, and a due proportion of artillery ; the rest being transferred, as will be seen, to the Ebro. It numbered close upon twenty-two thousand men, exclusive of four thousand sick, and was entrusted to Suchet.

The Army of Catalonia was also reduced at first to fifteen thousand effective men, but was eventually increased, by the addition of Reille's division from Suchet's army, to twenty-five thousand ; and the supreme command, civil and military, in Catalonia was vested in General Decaen.

1812. A more ambitious change was the formation of a new corps called the Army of the Ebro, under the command of General Reille, with a nominal strength, on paper, of forty-three thousand men. For this purpose the Reserve was moved from France into Spain, and raised, by the incorporation of Severoli's Italians and Frere's French division from Suchet's force, to a total of thirteen to fourteen thousand effective men. But this army was broken up almost as soon as created. The number had been reduced by the transfer of Reille's division to Decaen, and of Palombini's to the Army of the North, and it can hardly be said to have enjoyed an independent existence at all. Still the duties prescribed to it were sufficiently onerous, namely, to keep order in Catalonia, to look to the victualling of Barcelona, to protect Aragon, and to maintain communication through Valladolid with the Army of Portugal, through Madrid with the Army of the Centre, and of course southward with the Army of Valencia.

The Army of the North was likewise remodelled. It was ordained that this should consist, besides cavalry, of three divisions of infantry, namely, that of Caffarelli, a second to be taken from Marmont, and a third drawn in part from regiments in France and in part from the Army of the Centre, with a total strength of some thirty-five thousand nominal, or thirty thousand effective men. Marmont, on receiving the order to detach a division, selected that of Bonnet, for which Napoleon took him sharply to task, ordering that these troops should be sent to Asturias. Ultimately the Emperor decided to weaken Marmont no further; and Suchet was directed to send Palombini's Italians to the Army of the North instead of to Reille; whereby Caffarelli's force, being allowed also to retain two regiments of the Guard and some National Guards under Dumoutier, was raised to its appointed numbers.¹

After all these arrangements, Marmont was left with

¹ *Arch. de la Guerre.* Berthier to Dorsenne, 18th Feb.; to Suchet, 19th Feb. 1812. *Corres. de Napoléon,* 18,573.

about fifteen thousand effective men for the Army of 1812. Portugal ; Joseph with about eighteen thousand—one-third of them Spaniards—for the Army of the Centre ; and Soult with about fifty-six thousand for the Army of the South,¹ making a general total of about two hundred and thirty thousand troops fit for duty in the French armies at large.²

The purport of these dispositions was evidently to secure the line of communication with France, and to extinguish the insurgent bands which threatened it ; no fewer than ninety thousand men being assigned practically to this duty alone from Tarragona to Oviedo. In fact Napoleon's parting message to Joseph prescribed the maintenance of the most direct communications with France as his most important duty, and forbade any offensive entry into Portugal unless rendered absolutely necessary by circumstances. The preservation and extension of conquests (such was the drift of this final instruction) was of course to be a principal object ; but continued warfare upon the guerilla-bands was still more imperative, and the attitude of the French troops towards the British army was to be a strict but imposing defensive. The Emperor's idea appears to have been that Joseph should content himself merely with minor operations, for the purpose of establishing such security as would ensure a victorious advance of the Grand Army into Spain upon its return from Russia.³

The plan, supposing it to have been practicable, was no

¹ After the fall of Badajoz, 51,000.

² I am aware that these numbers do not quite agree with those given by Napier in his appendix to vol. v. ; but mine are drawn, as were his, from the Imperial muster rolls, copied with my own hand in detail. The figures given by Ducasse, viii. 182, confirm mine. The details of reorganisation are drawn from returns in the *Archives Nationales*, and from Berthier's letters to Suchet, Dorsenne, and Reille, of 26th Jan. 1812, in *Arch. de la Guerre*. See also *Corres. de Napoléon*, 18,581, 18,632.

³ Clarke to Joseph, 12th May 1812. *Arch. de la Guerre*, partly printed in Ducasse, viii. 181.

1812. doubt a sound one ; but it was utterly upset by Jan.- Wellington's assumption of the offensive. The dislocation of the French armies, which was not accomplished April without innumerable orders and counter-orders, came just at the wrong time, and was, as we have seen, in itself a source of embarrassment to the generals. The guerillas in the north did not fail to take advantage of the opportunity, being encouraged by the active help of Sir Howard Douglas, the British commissioner at Coruña. It was indeed the principle of that very able officer to aid the guerillas rather than the Spanish regular troops with arms and money ; and with the assistance of a small squadron under Sir Home Popham, which had been sent at his request to the coast, he maintained the various bands in high activity. He was confirmed in this course by the discovery that the Spaniards contemplated embarking part of their regular force at Coruña for the reconquest of South America, and sending with them the muskets and artillery which had been supplied by England for the defence of their hearths and homes. Douglas intervened effectively to put a stop to this folly ; and meanwhile Mina and other chiefs gained success after success in Navarre, the Basque provinces and Upper Leon. On the 11th of January Mina and General Mendizabal overthrew a column of two thousand men under General Abbé at Sanguesa, killed six hundred men—having sworn to give no quarter—and captured two guns. At the end of February Don Benito Marquinez killed two hundred French dragoons and captured fifty more, at a point less than forty miles north-east of Valladolid. On the 11th of March Mina met a French column of over two thousand men, once again at Sanguesa, and defeated it, inflicting a loss of nine hundred men. On the 9th of April he crowned all previous efforts by surprising at Arlaban a large convoy which was going north under escort of a Polish regiment of fifteen hundred men and four hundred French from various corps, destroyed or captured four to five hundred of the troops, and carried

off two colours and every waggon of the convoy.¹ 1812. Shortly afterwards he narrowly escaped death owing to April-the treachery of a subordinate; and towards the end June. of May his activity was checked for a time by a wound received in action against General Abbé.

In Santander, Biscay and Guipuzcoa such leaders as Longa, Porlier and Campillo wrought mischief on a smaller scale but continuously upon the French; and about Burgos the priest Merino was indefatigably energetic and troublesome. It was said that no reinforcements on their way to the Armies of the North or of the Centre entered the town without being employed against Merino and his band before they were allowed to proceed. It was he who, just a week after Mina's victory at Arlaban, rivalled it by surprising April 16. a French column of about a thousand men at Peñeranda de Duero, and routing it completely; after which he hanged sixty of his prisoners in revenge for the execution of members of the Junta of Burgos by the French.² Still further to the east, General Duran on the 28th of May swooped suddenly upon Tudela, May 28. destroyed a number of guns which had been sent there by Suchet, and captured a quantity of arms and one hundred prisoners. Moreover on the 14th of June (to anticipate matters a little) he escalated Aranda de Duero, and drove the French from it with the loss of three hundred killed and wounded.

In Lower Catalonia, as we have seen, the French gained a signal victory over Eroles at Altafulla on the 28th of January; but that indomitable leader, together

¹ Mina in his letter of 11th April to Howard Douglas (Record Office, W.O. i. 262) gives the French casualties at 600 killed, 500 wounded, and 150 prisoners. Dorsenne (Ducasse, viii. 360) states them at 150 killed and 68 wounded. A letter from General L'huillier to Berthier of 16th April (*Arch. de la Guerre*) numbers the officers at 11, a figure confirmed by Martinien's list, and the men at 365. The regiment was the 7th Polish.

² These troops again seem to have been Polish, for Martinien gives a list of 10 officers of the 4th Regiment of the Legion of the Vistula wounded in this affair.

1812. with his companions Sarsfield, Milans, and Rovira, soon Jan.- made his presence felt in spite of the defeat. Twice March. towards the end of January Roviras beat off with considerable loss the attacks of French columns on the upper waters of the Fluvia. On the 30th of the same month General Milans threw himself across the front of a French column, five thousand strong, under General Lamarque, which was marching from Barcelona by the coast for the Ampurdan. Four British ships cannonaded the French from the sea as they moved, but Lamarque, notwithstanding some loss, forced his way into Mataro, where he halted for two days in the deserted town under continual fire from the British squadron. On the 2nd of February he resumed his northward movement, turned inland to avoid the broadsides of the British cruisers, and found himself harassed on the other flank by Milans. With great difficulty he struggled on for yet forty-eight hours, when, the Spanish commander being obliged to return to Mataro for supplies, he was at last left free to continue his advance, having lost five hundred killed and wounded in the five days of fighting. In the course of this same week, moreover, one of Rovira's lieutenants surprised and almost annihilated a column of five hundred French between the frontier and Figueras. On the 14th of February Sarsfield made a raid into France from Puigcerda, overthrew a French battalion which tried to check him, and, after levying contributions on the towns of Tarascon and Foix on the Ariège, returned on the 19th to Puigcerda with two thousand head of cattle and sheep, having suffered no further loss than that of a few men wounded. He had intended to come back by the valley of Aran, some seventy miles to westward as the crow flies ; and to ensure his safe retreat Eroles had been sent up with a thousand men between the two rivers known as the Noguera Pollaresa and the Noguera Rivagorzana. Finding that a strong column of over three thousand French under General Bourke was in search of him, Eroles took up a good position at

Roda,¹ and there awaiting Bourke's attack beat him off 1812, on the 5th of March after a fight of ten hours with the loss of over two hundred and sixty killed and wounded.²

Such were the more important successes achieved by the various bands, regular and irregular, in Spain during the first five months of 1812; and they were supplemented by thrice as many petty engagements equally damaging on their own scale.³ They were of course chequered from time to time by defeats more or less severe; but such reverses were comparatively rare; and the exertions demanded of the French, often to no purpose, in the chase of these elusive enemies, wasted their ranks little less than actual overthrow in the field. There was therefore ample employment for the armies of Catalonia, of the Ebro and of the North, even if they should devote their whole time and energy to the security of their communications, as Napoleon appears to have desired. But it was obviously impossible that they could do so unless the British and Portuguese could be compelled to stand on the defensive.

The task set to Joseph, then, was so to adjust the movements of the armies placed under his command as to fulfil this condition. It must be confessed that the Emperor had not made it easy for him. In the first place the King, when he received on the 28th of March his commission as Commander-in-Chief, had not the slightest idea as to the numbers, composition, locality, and designs either of his own armies or of his enemy's. Moreover, all the Generals had been irritated by the amazing confusion and absurdity of Napoleon's plans for the relief of Badajoz. Napoleon had counted upon Marmont's advance into Beira to raise the siege, and had informed him that Soult would send twenty thousand men under

¹ Roda lies about forty-five miles due north of Lerida.

² Napier says 150 killed and wounded; Arteche (no doubt following Eroles) 1000; my figures, 60 killed, 209 wounded are taken from a letter of Suchet to Berthier, 23rd March. *Arch. de la Guerre.*

³ Suchet to Berthier, 23rd March, mentions that Palombini had lost 110 men in a small affair against Villacampa.

1812. d'Erlon to the Guadiana. Imperative orders to that effect were actually sent to Soult on the 19th of February, with a further instruction that the corps under Drouet was to invade the Alemtejo. The despatch ended with a sharp intimation that Ballesteros was an enemy who might be ignored, since Suchet would suffice to keep him employed ; and that Soult and no one else was responsible for the country to south of the Tagus. This absurd missive did not reach Soult until the third week in April. In answer, he quietly explained that it was quite impossible for him to spare twenty thousand men for d'Erlon ; but meanwhile Napoleon on the 3rd of April had hinted that a junction of the armies of Marmont, of Soult, and of a detachment from the Army of the Centre on the south of the Tagus, would confront Wellington with a force twice as numerous as his own, and compel him to raise the siege of Badajoz. On the same day Joseph heard from Marmont that, if his manœuvres on the Agueda had no effect as a diversion in favour of that fortress, he should move southwards and send a division to join Foy's in making a raid into the valley of the Tagus. Joseph therefore sent a large supply of provisions to Talavera to victual these two divisions, and despatched General Darmagnac with three battalions and two regiments of horse to occupy that place, and so to release Foy for active operations. These dispositions, however, compelled him to apply to Suchet for a reinforcement of one division from the Army of Valencia ; and, before he could adjust himself any further to the situation, there came the news that Badajoz had fallen.¹

Here therefore was a new complication which, in the dearth of intelligence respecting any of the armies excepting that of Portugal, rendered the existing obscurity doubly obscure to Joseph. He had sent letters to all of the commanding Generals, but so far without

¹ Berthier to Soult, 19th Feb. 1812. *Arch. de la Guerre*, Napoleon to Berthier ; Jourdan to Berthier, 3rd April 1812, printed in Ducasse, viii.

receiving any answer except from Marmont ; wherefore, thinking the re-establishment of communications April 1812, with Soult to be of the first importance, he ordered Darmagnac's detachment and one brigade of Foy's division to enter La Mancha so as to regain touch with the Army of the South at Andujar. Joseph also April 27 announced his intention of sending to the same quarter any troops which he might receive from Suchet, so that there might be a corps ready to help Soult in case Wellington should invade Andalusia. At last there came a despatch from Dorsenne, which said nothing as to his own situation, but gave Joseph to understand that the Army of the North was not under the King's command but under the immediate orders of the Emperor. This was unpleasant for the unfortunate monarch ; but it was only a beginning of mortifications. A few days later arrived a letter from Marmont deprecating the idea of transferring any part of his force to the south of the Tagus. He admitted that possibly Wellington might have designs upon Andalusia ; but in that case the British General would, at most, only drive the French from that province without occupying it permanently, whereas, if he should learn that the Army of Portugal had made strong detachments to the south, he might double back and overwhelm the remnant left in the north before it could be succoured. On the whole, therefore, Marmont announced that he should stay in the vicinity of Salamanca, hinting with little disguise that the Army of Portugal could best be turned to account by placing the whole of it, without any deduction whatever, at the disposal of its proper commander, so that he might establish himself firmly and in strength upon the Zezere.¹

By this time May was come, and during its early days Joseph received a series of messengers. First came one from Napoleon conveying orders to see that Marmont

¹ *Archives de la Guerre.* Jourdan to Berthier, 27th April 1812 ; Ducasse, viii. 398, 413. Dorsenne to Joseph, 19th April ; Marmont to Jourdan, 29th April 1812.

1812. acted in concert with Soult for the relief of Badajoz, May. and to take care that his royal commands were obeyed. Secondly, Suchet sent one to express his regret that he could not spare the division required of him. Thirdly, there arrived an aide-de-camp from Soult who reported that, when he left Seville on the 23rd of April, no information had reached the Marshal that he was under the King's command at all, and that consequently he, the aide-de-camp, would not allow his chief's reports to Berthier to be opened at Madrid. Fourthly, a letter from Marmont announced that Wellington had certainly five divisions on the north bank of the Tagus, and that all indications pointed to an advance of the British upon Salamanca. At last, therefore, Joseph and Jourdan ascertained enough concerning the forces under their control to frame some kind of plan for employing them. Supplies and transport were absolutely wanting, so that there was no prospect of operations on any great scale before harvest ; but at least something could be done towards making the various commanders work for a common object. Rightly concluding from Marmont's reports that Wellington's next movement would be in the north, Jourdan cancelled his instructions respecting La Mancha, ordered Darmagnac to keep his detachment at Talavera, and released Foy's troops for the exclusive service of the Army of Portugal. Marmont was directed to stand fast at Salamanca unless he should find three or fewer British divisions opposed to him in that quarter, in which case he was to march with four divisions to Almaraz. Suchet was bidden to make some kind of diversion in Murcia, so as to keep the Spaniards there from annoying the Army of the South ; and Soult, having been first informed that this was no time for trifles such as the siege of Tarifa, was positively commanded to reinforce d'Erlon's corps on the Guadiana, so that it should either be able to beat Hill, if that commander remained on his front, or to march rapidly for the bridge of Arzobispo in order to cover Madrid, if Hill should cross to the right bank of the Tagus.

Intimations to the same effect were sent directly to 1812. d'Erlon. "The success of the French armies in Spain" May. (such was the close of Joseph's letter to Soult) "depends henceforward on the concert of the Armies of the South and of Portugal ; and I am placed in the centre to ensure that concert."¹

These commands blew the smouldering fires of insubordination into full blaze. Marmont in his answer began by reporting that three of the five British divisions before him had disappeared, he knew not whither, and that therefore he could not tell what Wellington's plans might be. He then proceeded to observe that unless Dorsenne gave him a division—which that officer had refused to do—he could not send more than three divisions to the Tagus ; and he ended by declaring that he should think himself criminal if he obeyed Joseph's latest instructions. Caffarelli, who had succeeded Dorsenne in command of the Army of the North, replied after the fashion of his predecessor that he was not under the King's orders. Soult after considerable delay urged persistently that Wellington was beyond doubt contemplating the invasion of Andalusia, and that Marmont ought to place his army about the pass of Baños so as to be ready to cross the Tagus at a moment's notice. Poor Joseph, much bewildered, suggested to Marmont that Soult after all might be correct ; but he weakly conceded that, in such an event, it would suffice for three divisions of the Army of Portugal to cross the Tagus. Soult now followed up his first letter by two more, one of which added to his reiterated opinion a vehement attack upon Marmont, while the other declared that, if Joseph were going to issue orders direct to subordinate generals, such as d'Erlon, he, Soult, would not be responsible for the Army of the South, but would be glad to be relieved of his command. D'Erlon, for his part, wrote loyally that he knew not how to act between the conflicting instructions of the

¹ Ducasse, ix. 1-8. *Arch. de la Guerre* ; Jourdan to Marmont, 4th May 1812.

1812. Marshal and of the King, since obedience to either might June. bring about disaster. Joseph thereupon informed Soult that he might resign his command to d'Erlon if he so wished ; but the offer was not accepted. So matters stood at the end of June, long before which the general confusion had been worse confounded by Hill's destruction of the bridge of Almaraz. Joseph and Jourdan were in despair. All the commanders of armies without exception defied them. Soult studiously abstained from announcing in orders to his corps that it was subject to the direction of the King ; and Suchet had gone to the length of proclaiming to his troops that they were under his own sole command. The head-quarters staff at Madrid could not even obtain returns of the strength of the forces which they were supposed to govern, much less of their dispositions. Meanwhile starvation reigned in that capital ; bread cost eighteenpence a pound ; an insurrection was daily expected ; and guerilla-bands made depredations up to the very gates. Utterly powerless to mend matters, Joseph and Jourdan addressed complaints to the Minister for War at Paris ; but he could give no help. They also appealed to Napoleon himself ; but the Emperor was twelve hundred miles away. After declaring war against Russia on the 22nd of June he had set four hundred thousand men in motion to cross the Niemen, and could spare no attention for lesser campaigns.¹

Compared with Joseph's position, therefore, that of Wellington was comparatively easy. As to his plans for the future he had already made up his mind. The Spanish Government was pressing him to invade Andalusia ; but for that the time was now past. The harvest in that province would begin in June, and then Soult would be able to assemble and to move his army,

¹ Ducasse, ix. 1-37. Ducasse has a maddening habit of leaving many letters unprinted which are referred to in the rest of the correspondence. I have, however, found most of them in *Arch. de la Guerre*, notably Marmont to Joseph of 7th May, and Soult to Joseph of 26th May 1812. Many parts of the former letter are obscure, having been either ciphered or deciphered incorrectly.

living on the country. Moreover, the crops in Estremadura would also be reaped by the second week in June. June, so that, if the British should turn southward, Marmont would be able to march into that province and strengthen Soult's army to a number far exceeding that of the Allies. On the other hand, the harvest in Castile did not ripen until August, so that there were still two months during which Marmont would be helpless in that quarter from want of victuals. The Marshal, indeed, with much misgiving recognised the fact,¹ which was the more galling since he had just received some heavy cannon which, if he could but have collected supplies, would have enabled him to attack Ciudad Rodrigo. The arrival of these guns furnished an additional reason for Wellington to remain in the north ; and in spite of his bitter railing against Carlos d'España and the Spanish Government for their neglect (which was culpable enough) to repair and revictual Ciudad Rodrigo, it may be doubted whether he had ever seriously contemplated the invasion of Andalusia at all. The risk of such an operation even in the most favourable circumstances must have been very great, while avowedly the only object that would be attained by it was the raising of the siege of Cadiz and the evacuation of Andalusia by Soult. But such evacuation would naturally have tended to concentrate the French armies, whereas Wellington's sole hope of success lay in keeping them dispersed. Now, as Wellington himself confessed, Soult, so long as he remained in Andalusia, was obliged to blockade Cadiz, and to that end was bound to keep garrisons in Seville, Granada, Malaga, and other places. But this in turn signified that he could not venture to withdraw his army for long from that province without leaving a sufficient force to hold Ballesteros in check. In other words, so long as Soult occupied Andalusia, at least twenty thousand good French soldiers could be paralysed by about fifteen thousand Spaniards, poor troops under a poor com-

¹ Ducasse, viii. 417.

1812. mander ; and it is difficult to see what object there June. could be to the British General in ending so advantageous a state of affairs.

Having, therefore, rightly resolved to carry his operations into Castile against the Army of Portugal, Wellington took measures for diverting the attention of the remaining French armies. The destruction of the bridge of Almaraz had done very much to secure his right flank ; but Hill must none the less be left to guard it against a large proportion of Soult's forces. It was therefore arranged that Ballesteros should pursue his old game of threatening Seville ; while Hill, who had already nineteen thousand British and Portuguese, should be further strengthened by the Spanish troops under Penne Villemur and Morillo. Knowing by intercepted letters that Joseph had ordered Soult to give a full third of his army to d'Erlon, but unaware of Soult's disinclination to obey, Wellington surmised that the Duke of Dalmatia would probably manœuvre by Hill's right. In this case Sir Rowland was to assemble his force in the position of Albuera, making a better use of it than had Beresford, or cross the Guadiana and place himself about Juromenha. If, on the contrary, Soult should manœuvre by Hill's left, Sir Rowland was to retire to Badajoz and post his army on the heights of San Christobal ; taking care, if the Marshal should still advance, to call out the Portuguese militia to Elvas, Campo Maior and Ouguela. Should Soult cover the movement of d'Erlon across Estremadura, Hill must not attempt the impossible task of preventing it ; but if d'Erlon's detachment alone should march across Hill's front through Estremadura, then Sir Rowland should be able to make matters very uncomfortable for him. Any further complications, such as an advance of the Army of the Centre, would be dealt with as occasion might arise. Meanwhile the Empecinado had received orders to make demonstrations near Madrid so as to alarm King Joseph for his capital.

So much for the Armies of the South and Centre : 1812. there remained still that of Suchet, which, on the strength June. of information from Downing Street, Wellington hoped might be effectually occupied by Bentinck with his troops from Sicily. The siege of Tarragona was the operation which he had prescribed as most desirable for Bentinck's force, and he had taken great pains to provide a battering-train for that purpose, drawing ammunition for the heavy guns even from Cadiz, when Gibraltar was found unable to supply it, rather than suffer Lord William to be ill-equipped.

Finally there was the Army of the North, for which Popham's naval squadron was already furnishing employment by raids on the coast, but which was to be still further harassed by an advance of the Army of Galicia, under Castaños, upon Astorga. Moreover four battalions of Portuguese militia and three regiments of cavalry under d'Urban were to move from Braganza along the Douro, so as to sever communications between Zamora and Astorga, or in other words between Marmont and Caffarelli ; while Mendizabal had been entreated to give all the trouble that he could to Marmont himself. Altogether it seemed unlikely that in the north at any rate the French would be able to assemble in superior strength.¹

Nevertheless Wellington was not without his doubts and anxieties. In the first place he had based all his plans upon the presumption that Soult could dispose of only forty-five thousand men ; and not till the 9th of June—four days before he designed to set his troops in motion—did he discover that the true numbers of the Army of the South were fifty-two thousand. This rendered Hill's position more hazardous than Wellington had contemplated, the more so since Penne Villemur was inclined to wander off “plundering corn and crimping recruits,” instead of attending to legitimate business in Estremadura. To make matters worse, Ballesteros, on

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Hill, 6th, 10th June ; to Liverpool, 18th June 1812.

1812. learning that Soult was fortifying the line of the Guadalete at Bornos, forsook his shelter at San Roque to attack him, and was beaten back on the 1st of June with the loss of fifteen hundred men and three guns.

Within his own army also there was much to annoy Wellington. Colquhoun Grant, the prince of intelligencers, had by ill-luck fallen into the hands of Marmont during the French raid into Beira ; the Marshal had refused to exchange him ; and there seemed no hope of recovering him except by forcible recapture. Marvellous to say, Grant, even when a prisoner at Salamanca, managed to furnish Wellington with good information ; and on reaching Bayonne he escaped to Paris, sent valuable reports to his chief from there for some weeks, and finally making his way to England, rejoined from thence the British head-quarters in the Peninsula within four months of his capture. All this, however, could not be foreseen by Wellington, who deeply lamented the mishap, declaring that the loss of a brigade could scarcely have been more sensibly felt by him than the loss of Grant.¹ But misfortunes never come singly, May 28. and within a few days Wellington learned with regret, which was at first not unmixed with wrath, that General Murray, the Chief of his Staff, was about to leave Spain immediately to take up another appointment in Ireland. The Duke of York proposed to send Colonel Gordon, reputed to be one of the ablest officers at the Horse Guards, to succeed him ; but for the present Murray's place was taken by his Deputy-quarter-master-general, De Lancey. Within less than a week after this second blow Dr. M'Grigor came to June 3. report that General Graham would be obliged to go home very shortly in consequence of a disorder in his eyes ; so that practically within two months Wellington was deprived of his best intelligence-officer, of the chief of his staff, and of his ablest divisional general. But it was never one of his failings to repine over the

¹ Accounts of Grant's marvellous adventures will be found in Napier, iv. 466 sq.; and in *Autobiography of Sir J. M'Grigor*, p. 281 sq.

inevitable, and while returning thanks for the appointment of Gordon, he begged that no fresh general should be sent home of equal rank with Graham.¹ 1812.

More serious than any embarrassment on account of officers was the continuance of outrages by British soldiers when employed with small detachments, an evil which, to use Wellington's own words, had become so enormous as to be dangerous alike to the common cause and to the army itself. The General attributed it in part to the fact that the pay of non-commissioned officers had not been increased in proportion to that of the men ; but its real root lay in the sudden change in the regulation of regimental courts-martial, which had been forced upon the Army by the House of Commons. The new system had raised so rank a growth of legal technicalities that it was impossible for courts-martial to see their way through them ; and it was necessary to send home the proceedings of every court for confirmation before sentences could be executed. Hence, as Wellington reported, the guard-rooms were crowded with prisoners, but the guilty remained unpunished, to the destruction of all discipline and the general injury of England's reputation for justice. This, no doubt, was a result which had not been contemplated ; but it cannot too strongly be impressed upon the reader that the misbehaviour of the army in the Peninsula was due chiefly, if not entirely, to the interference of a small body of pedantic and sentimental members of the House of Commons. The only remedy which Wellington could suggest was that a legal assistant should be sent out, to convert, if it were possible, the folly of Parliament into wisdom ; and this was accordingly done. In November there came to head-quarters as Judge-Advocate-General Mr. Francis Seymour Larpent, a high wrangler and a respectable lawyer, but, more than this, a man with a seeing eye and an understanding heart, whose private journal is one of the most valuable documents that we

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Graham, 18th April ; to Murray, 28th May ; to Liverpool, 3rd June 1812.

1812. possess concerning the later period of the Peninsular May-War.

June. Yet another difficulty was less easily overcome, namely the old trouble of want of specie. In May 1812 the pay of the troops was three months, and of the Staff five months, in arrear ; the Spanish muleteers, upon whom the entire organisation of the transport depended, had not been paid for twelve months ; and there were outstanding bills for meat alone amounting to £200,000. The Treasury itself, at its wits' end for coined money, had negatived—rightly or wrongly—all Wellington's plans for raising the sums that he needed ; the remittances of precious metal from South America had been disappointing ; and, worst of all, Lord William Bentinck, with the characteristic selfishness of the enthusiast, had outbidden Wellington in the purchase of a large hoard of dollars at Gibraltar. The dearth of money was the more exasperating inasmuch as the partisans of the British in Castile had given him assurance of concealed granaries, great part of which would be thrown open to his army on credit, if only cash could be paid for the remainder ; and, though Wellington had taken what measures he could to meet such a contingency, the failure of this resource might be dangerously embarrassing. "I cannot reflect," he wrote, "without shuddering upon the probability that we shall be distressed, nor upon the consequences which may result from our wanting money in the interior of Spain." However, in spite of all obstacles, he began to concentrate his troops at the beginning of June, and by the 10th had collected the whole of them on the Azava.¹

June 10. Hill, meanwhile, after his raid upon Almaraz had retired first to Truxillo, and thence to Merida, leaving Foy, as has been told, to relieve the garrison of Mirabete unmolested. Upon the recall of Foy from the valley of the Tagus by Marmont at the end of May,

¹ Wellington Desp. To Liverpool, 12th, 26th May ; to C. Stuart, 10th May, 15th July 1810.

Joseph, supposing d'Erlon to have been heavily reinforced by Soult, ordered him to march after Hill on the left bank of the Tagus and if possible to fight and defeat him. As a matter of fact d'Erlon had only six thousand men with him, for Soult, in spite of Joseph's commands, had not yet sent him a single soldier ; whereas Hill had, including the garrison of Badajoz, nineteen thousand British and Portuguese, besides three thousand Spaniards under Penne Villemur and Morillo. None the less, on receiving a copy of Joseph's letter, which had been intercepted by Wellington, Hill judged it prudent to contract his cantonments ; and on the 3rd June 3. of June he collected his corps at Almendralejo, Villa-franca, Fuente del Maestre, and Los Santos, with his cavalry in advance at Ribera, and his Spaniards at Zafra. On the 4th Sir Rowland heard of the relief of Mirabete ; and a few days later d'Erlon fell back from his advanced positions at Medellin and Don Benito south-eastward to Fuenteovejuna. Hill thereupon followed him up ; and Penne Villemur arranged to make a reconnaissance from Llerena towards Azuaga on the 12th, in order to collect the harvest of Estremadura. With the object of covering Villemur's northern flank Slade with his brigade, about six hundred strong, was sent out to Llera on the 11th, with orders to proceed towards Granja, but on no account to commit himself to any serious engagement. June 11.

It so happened that d'Erlon had likewise sent forward Lallemand's brigade of dragoons, about eight hundred strong, from Granja on the 10th, with instructions to march by Maguilla upon Llera ; and by the morning of the 11th Lallemand had passed Valencia de las Torres on his way to the latter place. Slade, having information of the movement early on the same day, formed his two regiments, the Royals and Third Dragoon Guards, before a wood ; and the advanced parties of both brigades presently engaged each other in a skirmish. Lallemand, however, who had only one of his regiments, the 17th Dragoons, with him, and

1812. could not tell what might be behind the wood, pre-June 11. sently turned about and retired at a sharp pace. Slade thereupon followed him at a canter, and at length, after missing many favourable opportunities, charged with three squadrons of the Royals, supported by the Third. The attack was completely successful. Many of the French were cut down, over one hundred prisoners were taken; and the British dragoons, with Slade at their head, galloped in wild disorder after their flying enemy, and hunted them into a defile near Maguilla. Upon emerging from this, however, Lallemand's second regiment, the 27th,¹ was seen drawn up on their flank in the plain beyond; whereupon the British, stricken with sudden panic, turned round and flew back as fast as they had previously dashed forward. Lallemand seized the moment to launch the 27th at them; and, though a reserve squadron of the Royals strove gallantly to stem the attack, the remainder of the British dragoons could not be induced to rally in support of them. The French, therefore, enjoyed an exciting chase for some eight miles until at last pursuers and pursued, overcome by the heat and choked with dust, came to a standstill at Valencia de las Torres.

In this very disgraceful affair the Royals and Third Dragoon Guards lost twenty-two men killed, twenty-six wounded, two officers and one hundred and sixteen men prisoners, and over one hundred and thirty horses killed and taken; two-thirds of the casualties falling upon the Third. The loss of the French did not exceed fifty-one, including three prisoners.² The whole course of the action was exactly what might have been expected from Slade, who was always rash when he should have been cautious, and timid when he should have been

¹ Such is the account given in Soult's report and by Tomkinson. Ainslie (*History of the Royal Dragoons*) declares that it was not the whole regiment, but one squadron only. This I doubt.

² The French account slightly exaggerates the British losses to 3 officers, 127 men, and 150 horses taken, so that their own losses may be slightly understated.

bold. His first report of the mishap was so absurd 1812, that the entire army laughed at it, and his second report June 11, still left the greater part of the unpleasant story untold. Wellington was furious. The whole affair was occasioned, as he said, "by the trick our officers of cavalry have acquired of galloping at everything, and then galloping back as fast as they gallop on the enemy"; and it was the more vexatious for him inasmuch as the two regiments engaged were the best of the British cavalry in the Peninsula. It must, however, be conceded that the French had not much to boast of, and that their commander in furnishing his report was little more ingenuous than Slade; for he said nothing of the action previous to the scare at the defile of Maguilla, and wholly ignored the fact that the British had in the first place hunted him for eight miles and taken from him a great number of prisoners. Upon the whole, therefore, though the advantage was decidedly with the French, the action cannot be called creditable to either party. Happily two days later Lieutenant Strenowitz, Sir June 13, William Erskine's aide-de-camp, attacked eighty French dragoons at Maguilla with fifty-six of the Royals and Third Dragoon Guards, killing several and taking twenty-one of them, besides releasing many of the British prisoners captured on the 11th. This brilliant little enterprise did something to redeem the fame of the British horse.¹

On the 11th Hill fixed his head-quarters at Zafra, his own troops occupying Los Santos, Bienvenida and Usagre, and the detachment of Spaniards Llerena; and now at last Soult consented, though with a very bad grace, to reinforce d'Erlon, sending him Barrois's division of foot and Pierre Soult's of horse. He an-

¹ The authorities for this affair are Ainslie's *History of the Royal Dragoons*, pp. 32-35, which gives interesting details; "Rapport historique de l'Armée du Midi," for 30th June 1812 in *Arch. de la Guerre*; Tomkinson's *Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, p. 173; and see *Wellington Desp.*, to Hill 18th June; to Liverpool, 18th, 30th June 1812. The losses given in Soult's letter of 15th June (*Wellington Supp. Desp.* xiv. 50) are plainly absurd.

1812. nounced that these troops,¹ about five thousand men in all, would leave Seville on the 14th, and d'Erlon begged that they might join him by way of Constantina so as to gain touch with his cavalry at Berlanga ; but Soult June 16. did not despatch them until the 16th, and then sent them due north by Monesterio, obliging d'Erlon to move with his whole force south-westward to meet them, and thereby to endanger his communications with the Tagus. The junction was, however, safely effected at Bienvenida June 19. on the 19th, for Hill had already begun to withdraw his troops northward ; and on the 18th Sir Rowland retired to the position of Albuera, which he occupied on June 21. the 21st with some twenty-two thousand men, of whom over eight thousand were British.² Soult's orders to d'Erlon were to keep Hill constantly employed, to invest Badajoz if a favourable opportunity should present itself, and to prevent the advance of any English corps by the valley of the Tagus, but on no account to take the divisions of Barrois and Pierre Soult across the Guadiana. The Duke of Dalmatia, even on the day when Wellington marched from the Agueda upon Salamanca, still clung obstinately to the opinion that the British intended to invade Andalusia.

¹ The returns of 1st March 1812 give Barrois's division at 7776, and Soult's at 2338, all ranks, or 11,114 of all ranks ; but d'Erlon writing to Joseph on 3rd July (*Arch. de la Guerre*) gives the strength of the reinforcement at 3500 infantry and 1500 cavalry. D'Espinchal (*Souvenirs militaires*, i. 18) who was in P. Soult's division, says that Barrois's division was 12,000, and P. Soult's 3000 strong, and speaks of d'Erlon's complete force as numbering 20,000 men, which is self-contradictory ; for the above figures added to the force of d'Erlon's and Darricau's divisions (11,000 men) would make 25,000. But d'Espinchal is manifestly untrustworthy throughout, and his "journal" contains so much embroidery, evidently added after the event, that I have little faith in him. Still Napier gives d'Erlon 21,000 men, no doubt on the faith of Soult's papers, whereas d'Erlon gives himself barely 17,000. The discrepancy is curious ; but it is not clear why d'Erlon should lie about a point which could be instantly refuted by Soult. Hill's information likewise bears out d'Erlon.

² This does not include the Spaniards (3000 to 4000) under Morillo and Penne Willemur.

Looking to the numbers on both sides, it seems 1812. remarkable that Hill should have displayed such extreme caution in dealing with d'Erlon. "My information," he wrote on the 25th, "leads me to believe that the June 25. enemy's force does not exceed twelve or thirteen thousand infantry ; and, if I were certain of that, I should be prepared to move against them." But, as Wellington confessed, the quality of great part of Hill's troops was such that they could not be trusted to manœuvre in face of the enemy ; and moreover, Sir Rowland, not being admitted to Wellington's secrets, hesitated to take any risk by which his chief's ulterior intentions might possibly be frustrated. Even a decisive victory over d'Erlon, by calling Soult in force to the north, might derange Wellington's combinations. D'Erlon on his side was not less cautious, for, according to his intelligence, Hill had no fewer than thirty-three thousand men with him, exclusive of the Spaniards ; this result being arrived at partly by exaggeration of the strength of the corps actually present, but chiefly by the addition to them of the Seventh Division, which as a matter of fact was with Wellington, one hundred and fifty miles away. Incidentally this computation, in conjunction with a report that seven thousand British had landed at Lisbon and were marching to join Hill, gave Soult an excellent excuse for reiterating his former opinion that Andalusia was Wellington's true objective. To d'Erlon this same report was a source of perpetual anxiety. He therefore felt his way very carefully to Hill's front, and did not venture until the 1st of July upon a reconnaissance in force. On July 1. that day General Lallemand attacked Penne Villemur's Spanish cavalry, and routed them with a loss of two hundred men, which would have been still greater had not a squadron of the Third Dragoon Guards interfered to save them.¹ On the 3rd Hill, having received July 3. discretionary orders from Wellington to fight, advanced,

¹ The French report was that the Third Dragoon Guards on this occasion lost 2 officers and 30 men killed ; the true numbers were an officer and 4 men killed.

1812. and d'Erlon falling back took up a position at Valencia July. de las Torres to await attack ; but finding that he was unmolested he retired a few miles to Berlanga and Azuaga, while Hill established himself over against him at Llerena. There for the present the two commanders remained ; d'Erlon occasionally despatching parties towards Merida, but failing to cajole Hill into sending a detachment to watch them ; from which, as usual, Soult drew the inference that the invasion of Andalusia was imminent. Once only the monotony was broken on the 24th of July by a small engagement between Erskine's division of horse and Lallemand's brigade of dragoons near Ribera, wherein the British gained some advantage.

July 28. At length on the 28th of July Hill moved to Zafra, as a healthier station during the hot weather, whither d'Erlon followed him, having positive orders from Soult not to let the British General out of sight but to attack him in whatever position he might take up. The reinforcements sent to d'Erlon for the purpose, however, were not such as to warrant him in attempting so hazardous an adventure,¹ as they probably did not exceed three thousand men. The French General therefore stationed his troops along the Sierra de Hornachos, extending his cantonments from Guareña on the north to Valencia de las Torres on the south. For the second time Hill felt greatly tempted to attack him, being heartened by the news of a great victory—presently to be described—which had been won by Wellington near Salamanca on the 22nd of July ; but d'Erlon's position was strong, and there was neither hope of a decisive success nor prospect of being able to hold any country that might

¹ I can discover nothing about the reinforcement in the *Archives de la Guerre*, nor in any French authority. But Hill writing to Wellington on 21st July speaks of two columns joining Drouet in the third week of July, the one by Constantina, the other by St. Olalla and Monesterio. Of the first he gives no details, but he states that the second under General Bonnemain consisted of 3 battalions of the 9th Light and 250 horse, say 2000 men altogether. Hill to Wellington, 21st, 23rd July, 14th Aug. 1812. *Hill MSS.*, Brit. Museum.

be gained. Sir Rowland therefore remained steadfast 1812. in his cantonments about Zafra, until towards the end August. of August came the news that Soult was evacuating his sick and his stores from Seville upon Cordova, and evidently preparing for a great movement. In the circumstances Hill judged that it was time for him to thrust d'Erlon back, but that it would be imprudent to follow his adversary far while Soult, dis-embarrassed of all encumbrances, lay with his army concentrated about Seville. Accordingly on the 26th Aug. 26. Sir Rowland advanced, and on the 28th found that d'Erlon had fallen back from Hornachos. On the 31st d'Erlon's rear-guard was reported to have passed through Velmez; but Hill saw no object in pursuing him. "It seems to me," he wrote to Wellington, "that I ought to close up towards you"; and accordingly on the 31st he Aug. 31. turned northwards from Berlanga through Campillo and Castuera to the Guadiana at Villa Nueva de la Serena. His information was that Soult was making for Granada and d'Erlon for Jaen, and that King Joseph was retiring southward by the pass of Despeñaperros to join them, from which it was plain that the Army of the South was not going to traverse La Mancha. Hill decided, therefore, that he must march no further northward, and halted at Villa Nueva in some uneasiness, for he had received no orders from Wellington for several days. At last on the 13th of September Sept. 13. came the welcome command to cross the river at Almaraz; and the British troops bade farewell for ever to the south bank of the Tagus.¹

The great English historian of the war has commended Hill not a little for refraining in the month of June from a general action which promised him unbounded fame, because he was loth to risk the possible undoing of Wellington's operations in Castile. No one will hesitate to grant that with Sir Rowland selfish considerations counted for nothing and personal ambition

¹ See Hill's letters to Wellington in August and September 1812. *Hill MSS.*

1812. for less than nothing, or to join in encomiums upon a character which contained such excellencies. But Napier's estimate of d'Erlon's force is so utterly incorrect as to vitiate his comments beyond remedy. He assumed that Hill had twenty-two thousand men, and his adversary twenty-one thousand, whereas the latter in reality had but sixteen to seventeen thousand. It should seem then that probably a great opportunity of striking a telling blow was lost, and lost through Wellington's fault. Napier, it is true, mentions that Hill had discretionary orders to fight, but omits to point out that he did not receive them until he had informed Wellington of the weakness of the force opposed to him, and had hinted at his eagerness to take the offensive. The fact is that Wellington never dreamed that Soult would calmly sit still at Seville, as he did during the whole of June, July, and August, averring to the last that the principal design of the British was aimed against Andalusia and declining to interest himself in anything external to that province. Nor indeed can Wellington be blamed for failing to foresee such culpable apathy and selfishness in a good and able soldier. It was supposed that Soult had taken offence because he had not been appointed chief of the staff to Joseph—to all intent, that is, Commander-in-Chief—in place of Jourdan. It may be that herein he was unworthily treated ; but nothing can excuse his deliberate exposure of d'Erlon's detachment to the chance of overwhelming defeat by a force which, as he believed—or at any rate professed to believe—counted over fifteen thousand British and Germans, over thirteen thousand Portuguese, and from three to five thousand Spaniards, including four thousand cavalry and over thirty guns. That Hill, but for Wellington's orders, would have engaged d'Erlon at the outset and probably have handled him very roughly appears certain ; and in that case Soult would have been obliged to collect his forces hastily as best he could, leaving Ballesteros, who had recovered from his defeat and was eager for revenge, behind him. Seville would

then have been lost with all the sick and the stores 1812. deposited in it ; and there is no saying where the mischief would have ended. By good fortune rather than by his own deserts Soult escaped the disgrace which would have been attached to his name by the defeat of d'Erlon, and by the consequent exposure of his own misconduct ; but it remains none the less true that, whether it were dictated by jealousy or cupidity, by resentment against Joseph's command or by love of the good things of Andalusia, his behaviour during the summer months of 1812 was little else than infamous.

CHAPTER XV

1812. HAVING secured his advanced bases at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, and reduced the French north and south of the Tagus to the bridge of Toledo as their one
June 13. channel of communication, Wellington on the 13th of June crossed the Agueda with an army of about forty-three thousand of all ranks,¹ over and above from three to four thousand Spaniards under Carlos d'España. His divisional leaders at the outset were almost unchanged, but in the course of a few weeks the First Division fell to Campbell, the Third to Pakenham, the Sixth to Henry Clinton, who had lately joined the army, and the Seventh to John Hope.² Advancing in four columns Wellington reached the Valmusa
June 16. rivulet, within six miles of Salamanca, on the 16th, where after a trifling skirmish his cavalry drove that of the French across the Tormes. Having but two divisions in the town, Marmont retired in the night north-eastward towards the Douro, whither he had already summoned the remainder of his army, including Bonnet's division from Asturias and as many troops as Caffarelli could spare him. The bridges over the Tormes being all broken down excepting that of Salamanca itself, which was commanded by the guns of the French forts, the British army on the 17th forded the

¹ British and Germans: 1315 officers; 26,879 N.C.O. and men. Portuguese: 13,051 rank and file; say 14,682 all ranks. See Appendix for composition of brigades and divisions.

² John Hope the less; not the greater, who later became Lord Hopetoun.

river above and below the town ; and on the same day 1812. the Sixth Division invested the forts. A detachment June 17. was pushed on to keep Marmont under observation, and the main army took up its position on the heights of San Christobal, some six miles to the north of the town. Extravagant demonstrations of joy from the people of Salamanca showed how eagerly they welcomed deliverance from the French after three years of oppression.

The forts, which had been erected by Marmont in obedience to Napoleon's orders, were three in number. The first and most important had been developed out of the convent of San Vicente and bore its name ; it stood on a perpendicular cliff above the Tormes at the south-western angle of the town,¹ and was connected by lines of works with the old wall of Salamanca. Two hundred and fifty yards south and east of it, and on the other side of a deep ravine, stood the two remaining forts, San Gaetano and La Merced, both of them likewise founded upon convents, but of much smaller size, and square instead of polygonal in form. All three of these strongholds were formidable ; but report had unfortunately represented them as of small account, and Wellington had accordingly brought with him only four heavy guns, with such a mere handful of trained sappers and miners as to be quite inadequate to the business of a regular siege. Three heavy howitzers were borrowed from the field-train, and on the night of the 17th Colonel Burgoyne began the construction of a battery for seven pieces at a distance of two hundred and fifty yards from the northern front of San Vicente. But every circumstance militated against the besiegers. The ground was so much encumbered by ruins that it could not be excavated ; and it was necessary to bring earth from a distance. The moon was nearly at the full, and the workmen, being thereby exposed to a destructive fire of the enemy and being

¹ In Jones's *Sieges* the north point is misplaced in the plan of the forts, and the orientation in his text is consequently incorrect.

1812. moreover inexpert, made very little progress. An attempt to blow in a part of the counterscarp on the same night was frustrated with some loss ; and altogether the operations began badly. On the 18th eight hundred German Light Infantry were brought up, who taking cover among the ruins kept down in great measure the French fire ; and two more batteries were begun to right and left of the first ; that on the left, consisting of two field-guns, being placed in the upper windows of the convent of San Bernardo to ply that of San Vicente with shrapnel shell. On the 20th six large howitzers arrived from Elvas ; the new batteries opened fire from twelve heavy pieces ; and a part of the convent's wall was at last overthrown, falling like an avalanche upon the French sharp-shooters and crushing the life out of many of them. The British followed up this achievement with a shower of carcasses, and it was only by great exertions that the French prevented the convent from being burnt down ; but there the success ended. The enemy still maintained a destructive fire from seven pieces of ordnance, whereas the ammunition of the British was exhausted.

On the same day Marmont, having collected five out of his eight divisions, in all about twenty-five thousand men, was reported to be advancing from Fuente Sauco. Wellington thereupon withdrew one brigade of the Sixth Division to the main army, sent his heavy guns to the south of the Tormes and, suspending the siege, formed his troops in order of battle in an exceedingly strong position on the heights of San Christobal. Towards evening there was a slight skirmish between the cavalry of both sides ; and at five o'clock Marmont advanced to the very foot of the heights within short cannon-shot of the Allies. Wellington watched him with intense earnestness, saying now and again, "Damned tempting ! I have a great mind to attack 'em" ;¹ but he restrained himself, and allowed Marmont to throw shells on the hill with

¹ Colonel James Stanhope's Journal.

impunity for some time after dark. The Allies slept by 1812. their arms, and in the course of the night Marmont was joined by the rest of his force, Bonnet's division excepted, which was thus raised to a total of about thirty-five thousand men.¹ The day of the 21st, June 21. however, passed quietly until evening, when Wellington sent the Sixty-eighth to take a village on the right of his position, which had been occupied by the French, a task which was not accomplished without a sharp skirmish. On that night Marmont held a council of war, having some idea of attacking the Allies, but found that the opinion of his generals was unanimous against so hazardous a venture; though Foy and Clausel urged that he should stand his ground and manœuvre east and west on the right bank of the Tormes until his reinforcements should arrive. On the morning of the 22nd the Marshal reconnoitred Wellington's position June 22. from a point so close to it that an unsuccessful effort was made by two squadrons to cut him off; but he attempted no further movement than to seize a height before the right of the Allies, from which the Seventh Division promptly dislodged him. Thereupon he abandoned the forts to their fate and withdrew in the night to Aldearrubia, nine miles east and north of

¹ There are considerable discrepancies among the authorities as to the time when Marmont's whole force was assembled, and as to its numbers. Napier says that he started with four divisions of infantry, and was joined by three more and a brigade of cavalry on the 22nd. Belmas agrees with him as to the arrival of the divisions but not as to the time, which he gives as the night of the 20th to 21st. Marmont says that he started on the 20th with the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th divisions, but omits to mention when the three remaining divisions joined him. I have followed Marmont as to the strength with which he advanced, and Belmas as to the date when the rest of the army joined him, which is by implication confirmed by Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire du Général Foy*, p. 165. As to the number of the force, Girod de l'Ain says 30,000, which is certainly too low, Napier close on 40,000, which I think too high, and Belmas 32,000, which again I think too low. My own numbers are arrived at by deducting the strength of Bonnet's division and of 7000 for garrisons (including those of the forts at Salamanca) from the total shown in the returns of 15th April 1812.

1812. Salamanca, from which station he commanded the ford of Huerta on the Tormes, and thus could cross to the left bank to threaten Wellington's communications. The loss of the British from the 20th to the 22nd was one hundred and thirty-one killed, wounded, and missing.

Upon realising Marmont's new position Wellington June 23. on the 23rd made a corresponding change of front to his right. The Tormes, which flows from south to north as far as Huerta, makes at that point a sudden bend from east to west, so that it was in his power to act along the chord of the arc, while Marmont was obliged to move round the curve. Wellington therefore shifted his left to Morescos, his centre to Aldea Lengua, and his right to the ford of Santa Marta, ready to cross there at any moment; while Bock's German brigade of heavy dragoons was pushed over the water to observe the French at Huerta. The enemy remained quiet

June 24. on this day, but at dawn of the 24th two French divisions together with twenty guns and a body of cavalry forded the Tormes, and advanced southward upon Wellington's communications. Bock, though hard pressed, fell back with admirable steadiness and order; Graham led two divisions and Le Marchant's brigade of cavalry to his support; and Marmont, perceiving that Wellington was fully prepared for him, hastily faced about and retired by the way that he had come. He had in fact exposed himself to a formidable counter-stroke, for it was open to Wellington to reinforce Graham and overwhelm the French detachment on the left bank of the Tormes, while either holding the rest of Marmont's army engaged on the right bank, or falling upon their flank if they attempted to go to the assistance of their comrades. The fact that the only retreat of the detachment lay over the river by the ford of Huerta made such an enterprise particularly tempting, but Wellington abstained from any aggressive movement and allowed his enemy to withdraw unmolested.

Meanwhile four heavy guns had on the 23rd been

brought back and placed in battery to play, with such ^{1812.} scanty allowance of ammunition as still remained, upon June 23. the north-west front of San Gaetano ; and after an ineffective cannonade an attempt was made to escalade that fort and La Merced at ten o'clock that night. The troops of the Sixth Division, appointed for the attack, evinced no great alacrity in what seemed to them a desperate venture. Only two ladders were planted ; no one mounted them ; and in half an hour the assailants were beaten off with a loss of one hundred and twenty killed and wounded, chief among the slain being General Bowes who, though hurt early in the engagement, returned to the fight when he heard that the soldiers were yielding, and met—he if no other—with a glorious death. On the 26th fresh ammunition ^{June 26.} arrived ; the guns were replaced in the bastions ; San Vicente and Gaetano were plied with red-hot shot ; and on the morning of the 27th the convent of San ^{June 27.} Vicente was kindled beyond the power of the garrison to extinguish the flames. Moreover, a practicable breach was made in Gaetano. The latter fort then hoisted the white flag, and the commandant offered to yield it and La Merced, if two hours were granted to him to consult his brother commandant at San Vicente, who presently also sent out a flag of truce, proposing to surrender in three hours. Wellington, suspecting a trick to gain time, allowed only five minutes, and then gave the order to assault, when the forts were carried against little resistance, with the loss of seven hundred prisoners and thirty guns taken from the enemy. So far the operations had cost the Allies five hundred and ten of all ranks killed, wounded, and missing, seven-tenths of whom had fallen in the siege.

Thus without any great credit to the Allies was gained the first object of Wellington's campaign. He has been blamed for not assailing Marmont between the 20th and 22nd when the Marshal, with an inferior force, lay well within his reach. His answer was that the forward movement of the French seemed to indicate

1812. an intention to attack, that a defensive would have June better suited him than an offensive action, that his numbers were not so superior as to make an offensive action decisive, and that, in case of defeat, he had the Tormes in his rear with no bridge whereby to cross it.¹ The truth is that at the outset Wellington had been confronted with two unpleasant surprises. In the first place the Army of Portugal was much stronger than he had expected, and in the second he had thought it impossible that Marmont, in the face of Napoleon's orders (a copy of which had been intercepted), could recall Bonnet's division from Asturias. Taking into account these disappointments he expected no great results from his campaign, and, though he adhered to his determination to invade Castile, was inclined to husband his strength for some better opportunity.

Marmont has likewise been blamed for advancing to beard his enemy and yet lacking courage to fight him ; for making an initial blunder in locking up eight hundred men in the forts of Salamanca, and for then wanting the strength of mind either to rescue or to sacrifice them. It should seem further that his march to San Christobal on the 20th and his thrusting of two divisions in isolation across the Tormes on the 24th were operations alike aimless and dangerous. For all the good that he accomplished he had better have remained in his original station by the Douro. Marmont said indeed that he had intended to cross the Tormes on the night of the 28th,² so as to threaten Wellington's communications ;

¹ The criticism of Napier, who condemns him for not attacking on the 21st before the whole of Marmont's troops had joined the French army, is vitiated by the fact that the whole of the French force was actually present on the 21st.

² Napier's story, founded on "confidential official reports obtained from the French War Office," is hardly borne out either by Marmont's narrative, or by the letters published in Marmont's *Mémoires*, or by Marmont's official despatch published in Belmas, iv. 455. Napier's account is that Marmont would have fought on the 23rd, had he not heard on the 22nd that Caffarelli was sending him a strong reinforcement ; and that the Marshal learned by the evening of the 26th that Caffarelli's reinforcement was not to be expected.

and it is a fact that he issued orders to that effect, 1812 though he recalled them later because the fall of the June forts on the 27th had rendered such an enterprise useless. But, if he had really formed serious designs for this manœuvre, he would best have executed them on the night of the 22nd, before Wellington had changed position. Altogether it is plain that he was not at his ease in Wellington's presence, and was unwilling to run the hazard of such a reverse as Vimeiro or Bussaco.

On the night of the 27th Marmont withdrew his garrison from Alba de Tormes and retreated in three columns, the 1st and 7th Divisions with Carrié's brigade of dragoons upon Toro, and the remainder upon Tordesillas. Reaching the Trabancos on the 29th he June 29. halted for a day; but finding that Wellington was following him, he pushed on to Rueda on the 1st of July, and on the 2nd began the passage of the Douro July 2. by the bridge of Tordesillas. The Allies meanwhile had marched in three columns before dawn of the 29th, their advanced guard gaining contact with Marmont's rear on the 30th, and reaching Nava del Rey on the 1st of July. Having received a false report that the bridge of Tordesillas was destroyed, and knowing from intercepted letters that Marmont intended to take up a position near that place, Wellington made up his mind that the French had already passed the Douro, and ordered the forward movement to be continued on the

In an intercepted letter from Marmont to Jourdan (kindly communicated to me by Mr. Oman from the *Scovell MSS.*) there occurs the following passage : "I suspended my projected operations on the left bank of the Tormes because Caffarelli on the 10th, 14th, and 20th of June had promised me reinforcements immediately (m'avait annoncé des renforts immédiates)." This letter of the 20th of June is the last that could have reached Marmont before the 26th, and it was the first in which Caffarelli threw any doubt upon the arrival of his reinforcements. Marmont, however, evidently did expect them still on the 26th, and he says as much not only in his Memoirs but also in his despatches of 30th June and 1st July. It was not until the 26th that Caffarelli wrote definitely that he could send no infantry; and that letter evidently did not reach Marmont for a week.

1812. 2nd in two columns, the right upon Medina del Campo, July 2. and the left upon Rueda. To his surprise his advanced guard found a strong force of infantry as well as cavalry in Rueda, which was driven back in some confusion by the British dragoons and horse-artillery. The main body of the French army was still filing across the bridge, so that, had some British infantry been at hand, the rear-guard might have been almost annihilated. In the circumstances, however, Wellington refused permission to the cavalry to charge; and the enemy escaped with little loss.

Marmont, having broken down all the bridges over the Douro except that at Tordesillas, made that place the centre of his line; his left being at Simancas where the unfordable river Pisuerga protected his flank, and his right at Pollos, about nine miles, as the crow flies, to July 3. west and south of Simancas. Wellington on the 3rd marched the Third Division over to the ford at Pollos, and actually sent some riflemen of the Sixtieth across it; but the water was found to be too deep for any large number of men, while the ground on the north side was commanded by a large body of French troops. He therefore gave up for the present all idea of passing the river, and sent out his cavalry to explore the fords of the Douro generally. Meanwhile he disposed his troops over against Marmont's: the Third Division opposite to Pollos; head-quarters at Rueda; and the bulk of the army in rear of it at Medina del Campo. The soldiers of the two armies, where they came into contact, were on most friendly terms, bathing in the same streams, sharing comforts and exchanging rations, but never firing a shot. The weather was extremely hot and there was not a single tree to give shade from the sun; but wine was abundant in the immense vaults of Rueda, and altogether the rank and file found life not unpleasant during the deadlock on the Douro.

Far otherwise was it for their commanders. Marmont was joined by Bonnet on the evening of the 1st of July; but Caffarelli, who had at first been so free with promises

of reinforcements, had declared on the 26th of June 1812, that, what with Popham's raids on the coast and the July activity of the guerillas all round him, he could spare no infantry, though he would send both cavalry and guns. Nevertheless not a man had arrived at Valladolid on the day when Marmont crossed the Douro ; and the Marshal did not fail to apprise his colleague of the fact in extremely bitter terms. Sharp words, however, did not mend matters, and Caffarelli's subsequent letters were simply variations on a single theme—that the desire of his life was to send troops to the Duke of Ragusa, but that untoward circumstances forbade him to gratify it. Having foreseen from the first that little help would be forthcoming from this quarter, Marmont turned to Joseph and the Army of the Centre for reinforcements. The King, to do him justice, was anxious to strengthen the Army of Portugal, and had sent Caffarelli express directions to do so, though of course with no result. On the 29th of May Joseph had ordered Suchet to send him six thousand men so as to release that number from the Army of the Centre ; but Suchet had produced a despatch from Berthier bidding him use his troops as he thought best, and had added to it a letter of his own to the effect that he would resign rather than obey His Most Catholic Majesty. Soult, as we have seen, not only slighted the King's commands, but insisted that all Wellington's operations were designed against Andalusia ; and the unfortunate Joseph, excusably swayed by so strong an opinion, could devise nothing better than to scrape together four thousand men of his own little Army of the Centre and place them under General Treilhard in the valley of the Tagus, with orders to follow d'Erlon's Corps wherever Hill's movements might lead it, whether to Castile or to Andalusia. Up to the end of June the King declared that he could do no more ; but on hearing that Marmont had retired behind the Douro, he despatched an urgent message on the 6th of July to Soult bidding him move ten thousand men at once to Toledo, no matter what places such a

1812. detachment might compel him to evacuate. Soult July, answered on the 16th with an uncompromising negative ; and before his letter could reach Joseph, Marmont, as shall be seen, had taken matters into his own hands.¹

On Wellington's side matters, though more cheerful, were not without anxiety. After much pressure Castaños had at the end of June set in motion fifteen thousand men of the Galician army under General Santocildes to invest Astorga, the process being appreciably hastened by Bonnet's withdrawal from Asturias. But the operations went forward slowly from want of means ; and, though the Spanish batteries opened fire on the 2nd of July, their effect whether physical or moral was very slight. Popham had sailed from Coruña on the 18th of June, and had attacked several small places on the coast with varying success ; but little or nothing of his doings was known at head-quarters, albeit they were sufficiently energetic to distract Caffarelli. The advance of the Portuguese cavalry and militia upon Marmont's right was visibly disquieting to the Marshal ; but all Portuguese affairs were uncertain at the moment, owing to the dearth of specie. Moreover, Wellington had as yet no knowledge of the insubordination of the French Generals. He had intercepted more than one of Joseph's orders from Madrid ; but these told him only that d'Erlon had been instructed to leave troops enough to contain Hill on the south of the Tagus, and to cross to the north bank with the rest of his force. He had also captured a letter from Marmont summoning Palombini's division to his assistance, so that the increase of the Army of Portugal seemed to be endless. To make matters worse Wellington received just at this time Bentinck's report that he was renouncing the east coast of Spain to return to Italy, and was taking away with him all the specie that was at Gibraltar. As shall be seen in

¹ Ducasse, ix. 44-48. Joseph to Soult, 6th July ; to Clark, 17th July ; Soult to Joseph, 16th July ; *Mémoires du duc de Raguse*, iv. 120-123, 408, 411, 414-416 ; *Archives de la Guerre* : Jourdan to Suchet, 29th May 1812.

due time, Bentinck, distraught by the many opportunities for the work of liberation which appeared to offer themselves on all sides, had decided most wrongly to divide his force, and had actually shipped seven thousand men for Alicante on the 26th of June. But Wellington did not yet know of this and was in despair. "Lord William Bentinck's decision is fatal to the campaign, at least for the present," he wrote to his brother. "If he should land *anywhere* in Italy, he will, as usual, be obliged to re-embark, and we shall have lost a golden opportunity here." Finally it was in these same weeks that Graham and Picton were obliged to go home through ill-health, leaving their divisions to H. Campbell and Pakenham. James Stanhope, when presenting Graham's letter on the 3rd of July, said that he ought to accompany him to England, being on his staff, as a mark of respect. "I think you have seen the end of it," said Wellington; "if Marmont destroys the bridges and throws back his right on the Pisuerga, he is safe unless I can cross at Tudela de Duero. I shan't fight him without an advantage, nor he me, I believe. Therefore go, and if you come out again, I will take care of you."

From the 3rd until the 16th of July the two forces July 3-16. remained in view of each other inactive ; Marmont merely shifting troops from end to end of the line and repairing the bridges of Toro and Puente Duero at the extremities, so as to keep his adversary in continual suspense as to his designs. But before the 14th Wellington's anxiety had been considerably allayed by the knowledge that neither Caffarelli nor Palombini were likely to add any strength to the Army of Portugal, though he was still in doubt as to the movements of d'Erlon and of the King. Meanwhile it was quite certain that he must not dream of attacking the French in their present advantageous position ; and he could conceive of no method of disturbing Marmont except by asking Santocildes to reduce his force before Astorga as low as possible consistently with safety, and to send the remainder down the Esla upon the Marshal's right rear.

1812. Wellington was not aware that there was much
July 3-16. discontent in the French army over the feeble de-
monstration before San Christobal in June, and a
strong feeling in favour of a bold offensive. Marmont
was a good and accomplished soldier and a skilful
tactician ; but he was not, in the presence of difficulties,
a resolute man. In the actual circumstances of the
moment he dominated the situation. He had the
entire harvest ready to his hand to furnish supplies,
and needed only to sit still patiently for yet a little
while ; for, whatever the apparent vacillations of Joseph,
it was plain that at Madrid the reinforcement of the
Army of Portugal was regarded as of the first import-
ance to the campaign. It is true that Marmont's officers
complained of his inaction and want of enterprise ; but
Wellington's officers were equally crying out against
their Chief for precisely the same reason ; and Marmont's
spies cannot have failed to apprise him of the gossip in
the Allied camp. Yet, while Wellington treated such
clamour with contempt, the Marshal writhed under it
with all the sensitiveness of a man who was less master
of himself than slave of his reputation. He had injured
his fame by the loss of the forts of Salamanca ; and he
felt impelled to do something—he knew not clearly
what—in order to redeem it. This impatient impulse
was strengthened by the fact that his last letters both
from Jourdan and Joseph held out no hope of aid from
the Army of the Centre, and urged him to fight a battle
at once before Hill should join Wellington and raise the
Allied Army to overpowering strength. Such counsel,
being founded upon the false assumption that Well-
ington had only eighteen thousand British troops with
him instead of thirty thousand, might well have been
disregarded by a commander of clearer insight and
greater force of will. By a strange irony Joseph, on
the 9th of July, had finally made up his mind to
evacuate the greater part of New Castile and to march
with fourteen thousand men to the assistance of the
Army of Portugal ; but both the original and the

duplicate of his letters to Marmont were intercepted 1812. and brought to Wellington, so that the Marshal had July 3-16. nothing to guide him but the earlier instructions. Interpreting these with the impetuosity which so often accompanies weakness the Duke of Ragusa resolved to take the offensive.¹

On the morning of the 16th Marmont with much July 16. ostentation shifted a body of troops to Toro and sent Bonnet's division across the bridge. Wellington accordingly made a corresponding movement to his left. Then under cover of night Marmont recalled Bonnet, broke down the repairs of the bridge at Toro, and, massing the whole of his army at Tordesillas, crossed the Douro at that point on the morning of the 17th, July 17. finally halting at Nava del Rey after a long and exhausting forced march. On the night of the 16th Wellington had issued orders for his centre and left to concentrate on the Guareña about Cañizal ; but, from some suspicion of the enemy's real intentions, he directed the right, which consisted of the Fourth and Light Divisions and Anson's brigade of cavalry under Cotton, to halt some ten miles east of Castrillo at Castrejon. Having encountered advanced parties of the enemy about Rueda on his march, Cotton sent out patrols before daylight of the 18th, which were at once driven in by July 18. the French horse ; and a skirmish ensued between the cavalry and horse-artillery of both sides, Cotton holding his ground stubbornly. Meanwhile Wellington, being apprised of Marmont's arrival at Nava, had ordered Bock's, Alten's, and Le Marchant's brigades of cavalry to Alaejos, and the Fifth Division to Torrecilla de la Orden to extricate Cotton ; and he came upon the ground himself at seven o'clock in company with Beresford. Very shortly afterwards a small body of French cavalry

¹ Ducasse, ix. 38. *Mémoires du duc de Raguse*, iv. 121-123. Wellington Desp. To Graham and Clinton, 16th July 1812. The letter last quoted shows that Wellington had received Joseph's intercepted letter by the 16th of July. Mr. Oman was the first to discover this lost letter in the *Scovell MSS.*

1812. under a very brave leader advanced upon a couple of July 18. British guns. Some of Beresford's staff, alarmed for the safety of the pieces, assumed the direction of two British squadrons which were present, and by dint of giving them the wrong word of command threw them into hopeless and abject confusion.¹ The French cavalry galloping on not only overpowered the guns for the moment, but swept away Wellington, Beresford, and their staff, who were obliged to draw their swords and only escaped with difficulty. Shortly after this incident Marmont, having ascertained that only part of the Allies were before him, brought forward his infantry to Alaejos ; and Wellington, seeing that his left was turned, gave the order to retire by Torrecilla de la Orden.

The three divisions of infantry therefore marched off, each battalion in close column so as to form square readily at any moment if the enemy's cavalry should attack, while the British horse covered the flanks and rear. The French infantry on their side strained every nerve to cut off the Allies ; and for ten miles the two hostile columns strode on through stifling heat and clouds of dust in two parallel lines, not more than five hundred yards apart,² each continually quickening its pace in the hope of outstripping the other, yet neither losing for a moment the perfection of its order. The officers of both armies exchanged signals of courtesy ; from time to time the French guns unlimbered, and thundered out a sterner salute ; and once at least a body of French infantry ran forward and forced the Light Division to leave the road and strike through the plains of standing corn. All was to no purpose. The British reached the Guareña first ; and there was a general rush for a draught of muddy water. Instantly the French guns appeared on the

¹ See Tomkinson, p. 181. When staff officers try to take the place unnecessarily of regimental officers, mishaps nearly always follow.

² Napier, who was present, says "half musket shot," whatever that may mean. Simmons says five hundred yards, which appears to me nearer the truth, but no doubt the distance constantly varied.

heights above, unlimbered, and poured such a tempest ^{1812.} of shot upon the Fifth Division that Leith deployed July 18. his brigades, and in that order ascended the rising ground on the other side of the stream,¹ while the Light and Fourth Divisions were fain to leave the water and hurry on. Arrived at the summit of the heights, all three divisions faced about, the Fourth on the left of the new front about Castrillo; the Light Division in the centre; and the Fifth on the right about Cañizal; the remaining divisions, by Wellington's orders, forming still farther to the right at Vallesa. Meanwhile the French came up in two columns, and Clausel, who commanded that on the right, seeing few troops before him, pushed Carrié's brigade of dragoons² over the ford near Castrillo with a battalion of infantry and three guns in support. Victor Alten met the dragoons with his brigade of light cavalry, and after a confused fight amid blinding dust succeeded in driving them back to the refuge of their infantry, with a loss of ninety-four prisoners, including Carrié himself. Reinforced by the Third Dragoons, Alten appears next to have essayed a second attack, which was unsuccessful; but the Twenty-seventh and Fortyethcoming up from the Fourth Division soon swept the isolated battalion away with the bayonet, and a squadron of German hussars, pursuing, captured about one hundred and fifty prisoners. The loss of the cavalry in this affair amounted to one hundred and forty-five killed, wounded, and taken;³ and the casualties of the Allies for the day reached the total of

¹ Napier says that the Fifth alone halted to drink, and that the Light Division drank as they marched. Leith admits that he halted the Fifth; but Leach of the Ninety-fifth and Cook of the Forty-third agree that the Light Division made a general rush for water; Cooke adding words which imply that thirst for once prevailed over discipline; while Leach says that he can never forgive the French for not permitting him to drink without the accompaniment of a nine-pound shot. Grattan confirms the story of the rush for water.

² The German authorities, Beamish and Schwertfeger, say that it was not Carrié's brigade only but Boyer's whole division.

³ It is difficult to know what to make of this little action. The German authors represent Victor Alten's conduct as brilliant;

1812. four hundred and forty-two of all ranks, of whom one July 18. hundred and forty fell in the Twenty-seventh and Fortieth, and one hundred and thirty in the Portuguese. Those of the enemy can hardly have been fewer.

During the night Wellington threw up some field-works for the defence of his position ; and on the July 19. following day the two armies looked at each other until the afternoon, the heat being intense and Marmont anxious to give his troops some rest and to collect his stragglers. The Marshal, however, knowing the country intimately, had matured his design to ascend the eastern branch of the Guareña until it became a mere rivulet, to cross it at Cantalapiedra, and to occupy in considerable force a high plateau which extended from that point without an undulation almost to Salamanca. Accordingly at four o'clock he started on the first stage of his journey with a short march to his left as far as Tarazona, upon which Wellington made a corresponding movement on his right to the heights of Vallesa.

July 20. On the 20th Wellington expected to be attacked, but found to his dismay that the French were speeding up the river and had actually passed it before any dispositions could be made to oppose them. Marmont in fact had turned the Allied right flank ; and Wellington had no alternative but to follow him in a parallel line but on lower ground. Both armies were formed in parallel columns, the French in two and the Allies in three, with cavalry in the van and rear ; and both preserved their distances and intervals so exactly that either could be brought at a moment's notice into battle array by the simple word "Right (or Left) wheel into line." Between them was a slight hollow, so that they could see each other perfectly ; and being

Napier, who never grudged praise to the German Legion, takes a contrary view ; and his account is supported by the fact that Alten lost twelve prisoners, which points at any rate to a moment of ill-success. The account given by Grattan (not a very trustworthy author) differs altogether from the others, and brings two French divisions instead of a single French battalion of infantry into action.

within cannon-shot the French artillery from time to 1812. time unlimbered and fired a few rounds, which did July 20. little or no damage. So the two hosts strode on in a vast interminable cloud of dust ; racing, yet with all the superb order of a parade-movement, for the Tormes ; while the two commanders with a nerve more surprising even than their consummate mastery of their art, each watched coolly, though in vain, for some technical blunder on the part of his rival.

By noon the rear of the Allies had dragged itself out into a long tail of straggling vehicles ; and Bonnet, it is said, begged Marmont's permission to fall upon this disorderly crowd, but was sternly refused. The Marshal had gained the lead and intended to keep it. Wellington made a strenuous effort to cross his line of advance at Cantalpino but failed, for the French were the better marchers ; and he now forsook the parallel line, detained the Fifth Division to gather up the baggage and stragglers, and then bore away more to westward upon Aldearrubia, intending to halt his main body there, while sending the Sixth Division and Alten's cavalry to Aldea Lengua. Before evening the two armies had lost sight of each other ; but at nightfall the gleam of camp-fires revealed the presence of the French at Babila Fuente, where they commanded the ford of Huerta on the Tormes. As they had marched for a greater distance than the Allies, Wellington had not expected them to push on to the river that evening ; and he now saw to his disgust that he had been outmanœuvred. Without delay he brought forward his second line to join the first at Cabeça Vellosa, where the troops bivouacked for the night, having lost in the course of the march some four hundred stragglers captured by the French dragoons.¹

¹ So Marmont says, though no English historian mentions the fact ; but a private letter from an officer in the 79th mentions that his battalion (or his brigade, for the context is not very clear) lost 100 prisoners. I have to thank Mr. A. G. M. Mackenzie, A.R.I.B.A., for a copy of this letter.

1812. The troubles of this day did not end without the July 20. further mishap that d'Urban's Portuguese horse, being mistaken for French, were fired on by the Third Division and suffered appreciable loss both in men and horses.

July 21. At dawn of the 21st the Allies moved up to the position of San Christobal ; and there Wellington wrote a letter to Castaños and another to the Secretary of State, acquainting them that he could not hold his ground. Marmont, as he pointed out, was manœuvring to cut him off from his lines of supply, and he himself was unable to retaliate ; for the French armies, under their system of plunder, had no such lines. He was therefore determined to cover Salamanca for as long as possible, but not upon any account to sacrifice his communications with Ciudad Rodrigo, nor, except under very advantageous conditions, to engage in a general action. In fact Wellington had realised that his offensive movement was to all present appearances doomed to failure, and that, without some unexpected stroke of good fortune, he must retire to Portugal and resume the waiting game once more. His mortification cannot but have been aggravated by the despondency which was visible among all classes in Salamanca, and by the remembrance that on that very ground only one short month before, he had reluctantly permitted a great opportunity for a favourable attack to escape him.

Marmont, on the other hand, in spite of his success, had not laid aside his diffidence and irresolution. At ten o'clock, though the Allies had been in motion since dawn, his army was still stationary ; and, when at last his orders came round at that hour, they were based upon a fortuitous circumstance which had just come to his knowledge. Upon marching northward from Salamanca Wellington had left Carlos d'Espana in garrison at Alba de Tormes ; and that officer, seized with panic, had not only evacuated the place but, worse still, had, from dread of Wellington's wrath, omitted to inform him of the fact. Marmont accordingly issued direc-

tions for his army to march up the Tormes to Alba, 1812. intending to hold the town with his left, so that his front would face to the west full upon the flank of Wellington's line of communications. Foy combated this project, because it would not only reveal the Marshal's plans, but give Wellington an opportunity of foiling them. If, he argued, the intention was to cross the Tormes, it would be better to do so at once while there was no enemy in the way, instead of allowing Wellington a full day to occupy the plateau of Calvarrasa de Arriba, from which position he could make the passage a very difficult and hazardous operation. Clausel seconded the arguments of Foy; Marmont yielded to them; and at noon the French troops traversed the Tormes by the fords of Huerta and Encinos de Abajo, about three miles farther up the river, leaving one division behind them on the heights of Babila Fuente. Wellington made no effort to impede their march; and at nightfall they bivouacked between Alba and Salamanca, with their advanced parties occupying Calvarrasa de Arriba¹ and Nuestra Senhora de la Pena, a short distance to the west of the former village.

On learning of the movement Wellington left the Third Division and d'Urban's Portuguese cavalry entrenched at Cabrerizos, as a counter to the French detachment at Babila Fuente, and towards evening passed the rest of the army over the bridge of Salamanca and the ford of Santa Marta. The new position marked out for the army was with the left resting upon the Tormes near the ford of Santa Marta, and with the right upon a rugged hill, of which more shall presently be said, near the village of Los Arapiles, the advanced cavalry being pushed forward to Calvarrasa de Abajo. The movement was not complete until after dark, when the sultry weather broke up in a thunder-

¹ That is to say Upper Calvarrasa, as opposed to Calvarrasa de Abajo or Lower Calvarrasa. Arriba and Abajo correspond to the French *amont* and *aval*.

1812. storm of appalling violence. With such rapidity were July 21. the upper waters of the river swollen by the rain that the Light Division passed the ford almost shoulder-deep, while the lightning played on the muskets of the marching columns in sheets of fire so dazzling as to hinder the progress of the men. Many horses both of French and English broke away in terror and galloped furiously they knew not whither ; and some of those of the Fifth Dragoon Guards even tore their bridles out of the hands of the men, who were sitting on the ground at their heads, and injured many soldiers as they rushed through the bivouac. Then the rain came down with such violence that the Third Division, which was throwing up field-works at Cabrerizos, was obliged to desist, the trenches being full of water. All night long the deluge continued, with furious gusts of wind, forbidding all sleep and drenching both armies to the skin. But the darkness brought something worse than discomfort to Wellington in the form of certain intelligence that General Chauvel with seventeen hundred horse and twenty guns from Caffarelli's army had reached Pollos on the 20th and would join Marmont on the 22nd or 23rd. By a curious fatality Joseph also—though Marmont and Wellington knew it not—was marching the selfsame evening with thirteen thousand men for the Tormes.

July 22. The dawn of the 22nd broke cloudless after the storm ; and soon after light appeared Marmont rode up to the heights of Calvarrasa de Arriba to reconnoitre his enemy. Within cannon-shot to his front a single scarlet division—the Seventh—lay astride the road to Salamanca ; three to four miles beyond it a smaller body, evidently part of the escort to the retreating baggage-train, was visible ascending the hill of Aldea Tejada ;¹

¹ Both Foy and Marmont speak not of Aldea Tejada but of Tejares, which is three miles north-west of the former place, and six miles from where they were standing. Arteche accepts their statements literally, and goes wrong in consequence. Tejares is obviously a mistake for Aldea Tejada.

and far to the right the heights of San Christobal 1812. showed signs of a small occupying force.¹ All the rest July 22. of the British army was hidden by a range of hills which runs due south from the village of Santa Marta for over three miles, and is then broken for the space of a mile into the two flat-topped isolated hills known as the Arapiles. Only on the summit of the range was a little knot of horsemen, grouped about a central figure in a blue frock-coat and low-crowned hat, who could be no other than Lord Wellington. Marmont concluded that the Allies were about to retire to the position of Tejares, there to join the road to Ciudad Rodrigo ; and it occurred to him that the Seventh Division must be the rear-guard and that, unless he assailed it at once, it might escape him. He had already brought up Foy's division to the west of Calvarrasa de Arriba, and Foy's skirmishers were engaged in a lively bicker with the British Sixty-eighth ; but the Marshal refrained from a general attack, and after long hesitation decided to move his army southward so as to turn Wellington's right. The French officers who recommended this course appear to have hoped that Wellington would thus be manœuvred out of his position without fighting, and would then find his retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo a very difficult operation ; but Marmont had accepted their advice with a vague lurking desire for a battle. Nor perhaps was he unduly bold herein, for he had with him on the field some seven and forty thousand fighting men, good soldiers of one nation, with seventy-eight guns ; whereas Wellington had not above fifty thousand, British, Germans, Portuguese, and Spaniards, with sixty guns.²

¹ I am unable to divine what these troops can have been, possibly a detachment of D'Urban's cavalry from the other side of the river, or a flanking party of the escort to the general hospital which was evacuating at this time.

² I give the returns upon which I base my calculations in the Appendix ; but I suspect that the numbers upon both sides should be lower. Napier gives what purports to be a morning state of the sabres and bayonets of the army on the 22nd, amounting to 25,381

1812. Be that as it may, the Marshal summoned to him the July 22. detachment that he had left at Babila Fuente and set his whole army in march to southward.

To understand his movements aright it will now be necessary to consider more closely the nature of the ground over which the two armies were manœuvring. In its general character the country greatly resembles Salisbury Plain, being unenclosed although cultivated, and therefore favourable for cavalry, but nevertheless diversified by undulations which make it far blinder than the inexperienced would suppose. Two conspicuous features, however, strike the eye immediately, namely the two flat-topped hills already mentioned as the Arapiles. The more northerly of these, known as the Lesser Arapil, rises abruptly to a height of about one hundred feet ; and its summit, which is about two hundred and fifty yards long by seventy-five broad, is as flat as a billiard-table. It is so closely connected with the main ridge as to form a part of it, and was the feature upon which Wellington had rested his right flank. The second or Greater Arapil lies about a thousand yards to south of it and is far more isolated from the adjacent heights. Its summit is over two hundred yards long, and it rises to rather greater elevation than the Lesser Arapil. Both of these hills are exceedingly steep to climb, and in both of them the grey stone crops out thickly near the top, forming a little wilderness of rocks.¹ These two Arapiles, to use Napier's phrase which is no less correct than graphic, form the door-posts to a basin of apparently level

British, 17,517 Portuguese, and 3500 Spaniards, or 46,398 in all. Adding one-eighth for officers, sergeants, and drummers, the total would be roughly 52,000 of all ranks ; which by the addition of 2000 for artillery would be increased to 54,000. On the other hand Tomkinson (p. 184) summarises the Allied force on the 18th of July as roughly 40,000 rank and file of all nations, or say 45,000 of all ranks. I do not know where Napier obtained his returns, for I have been unable to find a morning state of the 22nd July ; but I believe his summary of it to be worthless.

¹ The Greater Arapil is now a quarry.

plain, about two miles north and south by one mile 1812. east and west, the northerly boundary being marked by July 22. a bold round hill called the Teso of San Miguel. At the foot of this hill stands the little village of Arapiles on the left bank of a tiny brook ; and to south of the village again the ground rises to the height of La Cuquera, which forms the western border of the basin. As a matter of fact the plain slopes gently upward for a mile to west of the two Arapiles, until it culminates at La Cuquera, from which point it declines as gently northward to yet another basin, which Napier has omitted to mention, although it was the scene of great exploits. Speaking generally, one standing on the summit of either of the two Arapiles can command singularly little ground, though the prospect may seem wide to him ; so many are the folds and hollows in which troops can be hidden away.

For Marmont, who designed to march round the southern flank of the Allies and then either to attack them or turn westward upon their line of communication, the two Arapiles were two little fortresses which would serve admirably to protect his army while it changed position ; and he accordingly ordered Bonnet to seize them at once. Bonnet thereupon detached troops for the purpose ; but Wellington being apprised of the movement sent the 7th Caçadores to be beforehand with them. At this the French broke their ranks and raced for the two hills. The Lesser Arapil, being close to the Allied position, was seized by the Caçadores without difficulty ; but the French were the first to gain the Greater Arapil, which they occupied at once with a battalion. Being the higher and more important of the two, this was sufficient for Marmont's purpose ; and having ordered guns to be brought to the summit,¹ and massed Bonnet's division in rear of it, he proceeded with his further arrangements. Foy's division he left on the plateau of Calvarrasa de Arriba,

¹ The guns were dismounted and carried up by hand, the hill being too steep to permit them to be drawn up.

1812. very advantageous ground, with Ferey's to support it in July 22. second line, and Boyer's cavalry in rear of all, the whole amounting to some ten thousand infantry and thirteen hundred cavalry. On the left of Foy the divisions of Clausel, Sarrut, Maucune, and Brenier, together over twenty thousand men, were ordered to march along the edge of the great forest which lay in rear of the French line, and to mass themselves south-east of the Greater Arapil, from which point they could move in any direction. Thomières's division, about forty-five hundred strong, was directed to move to a steep height, named El Sierro, somewhat farther to the south,¹ with Curto's light cavalry upon its outer flank. In their essence these dispositions were defensive, for Marmont was only waiting for the Allies to retire westward, when he hoped to inflict some damage upon their rear-guard.

Upon seeing Marmont's movements Wellington at once took steps to counter them. He therefore threw the light companies of the Guards into the village of Arapiles ; stationed Cole's division *en potence* on the Teso de San Miguel immediately behind it, and on the Lesser Arapil, which was occupied by Anson's brigade ; brought up Bradford's Portuguese and d'Espana's Spaniards to the right rear of Cole near the village of Las Torres ; and sent orders to Pakenham to cross the Tormes with the whole of his force and take post in rear of the village of Aldea Tejada, nearly three miles to the north of Arapiles. At the same time Wellington posted the Light Division to confront Foy's troops opposite Nuestra Señora de la Pena, with the First Division in support. Thus a new line was formed, extending from the Lesser Arapil in the east to Aldea Tejada in the west, with its face towards the south ; but the Fifth, Sixth, and

¹ Marmont himself says only that he placed Thomières's division on a steep height on "the left of the wood," but its position is correctly shown in Wyld's *Atlas*. Arteche, basing his opinion apparently upon a map in the War Office at Madrid, places it at Nuestra Señora de la Pena—a most astonishing blunder.

Seventh Divisions were still hidden away on the reverse slope of the ridge which the Allies had occupied on the July 22. preceding night. While these movements were going forward, Leith brought Lawson's battery within range to play upon the French columns as they marched southward ; but his guns were soon silenced with some loss by the superior cannon of the French. All was then again quiet until eleven o'clock, when Wellington, observing the accumulation of the enemy in rear of the Greater Arapil, decided to assault and take that hill, and actually brought the First Division forward for the purpose. Marmont, who was himself on the summit, anticipating a general attack, came down hastily and galloped to his main body ; but the troops of the Allies presently halted and faced about, Beresford having dissuaded his chief from venturing as yet upon the offensive.

This sudden retirement was not lost upon Marmont ; and about noon another sign convinced him that Wellington had begun his retreat upon Ciudad Rodrigo. A glorious sunny morning had already dried up the rain of the previous night ; and a huge cloud of dust was visible moving steadily from north-east to south-west. The Marshal inferred that Wellington meant to retire by his right, and was therefore reinforcing that wing to the utmost. As a matter of fact the dust had been raised by Pakenham, who, instead of making for the bridge of Salamanca, had passed the Tormes by the ford of Cabrerizos, and was striking across country, little more than a mile in rear of the Light Division, towards Aldea Tejada.¹ Certainly Wellington had not sent Pakenham thither without an eye to the general retreat of his entire host ; but Marmont's imagination magnified the movement of one

¹ See Cooke's *Memoirs of the late War*, i. 183, footnote. I imagine that he took the route by Sta. Marta and Carabajosa. Grattan, who might have informed us, wastes his space in inaccurate descriptions of what he did not see, instead of telling us what he did see.

1812. division of infantry and one brigade of cavalry into the July 22. march of half an army. Since Wellington was thus strengthening his right—so the Marshal reasoned—he himself must strengthen his left; and accordingly at about two o'clock orders were sent to Maucune to lead his division forward to the ridge next in front and to the left of him, known as the Monte de Azan, and to draw the men up on its eastern extremity with the division of Thomières in second line, and Clausel's as reserve in rear of all; while Brenier's division was to take the place of Thomières's on the height of El Sierro. Further, the whole of Boyer's dragoons, except one regiment, were withdrawn from Foy and stationed on the flank of Clausel; and finally one regiment of Bonnet's division—the 122nd—was directed to occupy an intermediate height between the Greater Arapil and the new position, so as to make the new line coherent. By this manœuvre Marmont judged that towards evening he would be able, if he wished, to cut off the communications of the Allies with Tamames and Ciudad Rodrigo.

Accordingly Maucune and Thomières set their troops in motion, while Clausel toiled after them far in rear; Maucune covering the entire movement by a heavy cannonade and a bold advance of sharp-shooters upon the village of Arapiles. In due time Maucune and Thomières reached the Monte de Azan, when for some reason the former, after a short halt opposite the village, extended his division far to westward, while the latter, instead of forming in rear of Maucune, not only came up to the same level but actually took the lead of him, hastening still farther to the west. Whether through their own fault or through Marmont's, both evidently imagined that the race of the previous days was to be resumed. Wellington, who had left his point of observation on the Lesser Arapil and was at dinner in a farm-house, came out at once on receiving the reports of his staff, turned his field-glass upon the French columns and ejaculated, "By

God ! that will do." Then hastening to the Lesser Arapil, he surveyed the scene with grim content. The whole of the Monte de Azan was covered with the horse, foot, and artillery of Marmont's left wing, all marching steadily away from any support of their right and centre. "M. d'Alava," Wellington is said to have exclaimed to his Spanish aide-de-camp, "Marmont est perdu." He at once brought up the Fifth Division to the right of the Fourth, with the Seventh and Sixth Divisions in support of them, leaving Beresford's Portuguese and Le Marchant's brigade of heavy cavalry to the right rear of the Fifth. Then for the first time Marmont from the top of the Greater Arapil saw the larger portion, though still not the whole, of the British forces, and sent an urgent message for the divisions of Ferey and Sarrut to march with all speed to the help of his left. But Wellington was already galloping at the top of his speed to Aldea Tejada, where Pakenham's troops, unseen and unsuspected by Marmont, were hidden behind the hill. Those who saw the Commander-in-Chief arrive thought that he looked paler than usual ; but his orders to his brother-in-law were terse—"Ned, move on with the Third Division ; take the heights on your front ; and drive everything before you." Pakenham had already called his men to arms and reformed his columns. "I will, my lord," he said, "if you will give me your hand" ; and Wellington having gravely offered his hand galloped back again to the centre.

Pakenham then marched off his troops in four columns. On the right was Alten's brigade, commanded in his absence by Arentschild, which consisted of the Fourteenth Light Dragoons, and the 1st German Hussars, together with five hundred of D'Urban's Portuguese horse ; on the right centre Wallace's brigade of the Forty-fifth, Seventy-fourth, and Eighty-eighth ; on the left centre Champalimaud's Portuguese brigade ; on the left Campbell's brigade of the Fifth, Eighty-third, and Ninety-fourth. The

1812. distance to be traversed was about two miles and a half, July 22. for the greater part of which the force was concealed by the intervening hills ; and the advance in spite of the dust appears to have been for some time unnoticed.¹ D'Urban, riding a little distance ahead with his two aides-de-camp, came upon the leading battalion of Thomières's division, marching very fast in column of companies, and uncovered by any mounted advanced party or scouts of their own. Stealing back unperceived, he realised that this battalion had already passed across Pakenham's front, wherefore wheeling his Portuguese cavalry into line, with two squadrons of the Fourteenth Light Dragoons in support, he ordered them to attack it at once. The French, taken by surprise, had no time to do more than close the second company upon the first, which enabled them to repel the Portuguese that fell upon their front ; but a single squadron charging upon their left flank broke them up completely and drove them with heavy loss up the hill.²

Then Thomières suddenly became aware of his danger. His division was drawn out in a long string over a distance of more than a mile, the head of it far in advance of the rest and inclining towards the summit³ of the ridge, while the bulk was still on the reverse side. In this desperate situation he appears to have hurried his men to the extreme western eminence of the plateau,⁴ so as to gain it before the Allies ; at the same time ranging twenty guns along the crest, and throwing out a cloud of skirmishers to his front in order

¹ Wrottesley's *Life of Burgoyne*, i. 201.

² These details are drawn from D'Urban's MS. Diary, as quoted by Mr. Oman.

³ Grattan says that behind the artillery Thomières's division was seen "endeavouring to regain its place in the combat"—a vague phrase which may mean anything, but which, when read with Burgoyne's account, seems to mean a farther extension to the west.

⁴ Burgoyne is the authority for this, and as he repeats the statement twice over with comments upon its bearing on the fate of the day, I cannot doubt that it is correct. Wrottesley, *Life of Sir John Burgoyne*, i. 201, 205.

to cover the formation of his main body. He also sent 1812. six squadrons of Curto's light horse¹ round the western July 22. base of the ridge to threaten the right flank of Pakenham's advance. Arentschild, whose function it was to protect that flank, came upon these horsemen drawn up on the farther side of a deep and high-banked ravine. Always bold and enterprising, he ordered his Hussars to file from the centre of squadrons over this formidable obstacle, holding the Fourteenth in reserve; and the gallant Germans, reforming on the farther side, charged and broke the enemy's first line. A second line of the French advanced upon them, however, while they were in confusion; and it seemed as if nothing could save them from being driven headlong over the precipitous sides of the water-course. With admirable presence of mind their officers galloped with all possible speed to the brink of the ravine, faced about there, and rallied their men under the protection of a part of the Fourteenth, after which the entire brigade charged, broke the French for the second time, and pursued them, taking many prisoners.

Meanwhile the British infantry continued its steady forward march, heedless of the showers of grape rained upon it, while the French sharp-shooters awaited the moment of deployment in order to pour in a destructive fire. But Pakenham, taking advantage of the oblique movement of the division upon the front and flank of the ridge, gave the word, when within two hundred and fifty yards of the enemy, to deploy without halting; whereupon, each company brought up right shoulders, and the three brigades formed three lines to their left, Wallace's leading, the Portuguese next in rear of it, and Campbell's brigade in reserve. The British skirmishers now ran forward and engaged those of the French, who, though greatly superior in number, made no effort to check the advancing array, or to gain time

¹ I deduce this from the narrative in Beamish, ii. 74-75; but Curto's movements are very difficult to follow, and I cannot be sure that this account of them is correct.

1812. for their main body to order itself on the crest of the July 22. ridge. There was in fact confusion, natural enough in the circumstances, and possibly aggravated by the fate of Thomières, who fell early on this day. The Third Division therefore climbed the hill against but feeble opposition, and on the summit found the French still only half formed. The enemy met them with one effective volley, which inflicted some loss;¹ but, when Wallace's brigade continued to press on without discharging a shot, the French fire became wild and the men began to waver. Their officers sprang forward to rally them, and the colonel of one regiment, snatching a musket from one of his men, shot Major Murphy, the commanding officer of the Eighty-eighth, dead. A single bullet from the British ranks took vengeance for his fall; but the Eighty-eighth, seeing the Major's corpse dragged along by his terrified horse, became uncontrollable. Pakenham shouted to Wallace to "let them loose." The brigade instantly charged, and the French columns dissolved into a mob of panic-stricken fugitives.

Meanwhile the struggle had begun also in the centre, though Wellington held back the divisions in that quarter until Pakenham should be fairly engaged. The cannon had been busy upon each side with fortunate results for the Allies, for Marmont was almost immediately badly wounded by a shell; Bonnet, the next senior officer, was also disabled; and until Clausel could be found, the French were without a Commander-in-Chief. The Fifth Division lay down on the open plain, exposed to a very heavy fire of artillery from the Greater Arapil and from the guns on the height beyond it, Leith riding slowly up and down on their front to encourage them; while the French sharp-shooters

¹ Grattan draws a sensational picture of five thousand muskets belching forth a torrent of bullets "which brought down almost the entire of Wallace's first rank and more than half of the officers." This is mere Milesian boasting. Wallace's brigade went into action at least 1600 strong, and lost 237 killed, wounded, and missing. Of 81 officers, 2 were killed and 11 wounded, of whom 4 slightly.

delivered attack upon attack against the village of 1812. Arapiles. At last Wellington came up and directed July 22. Leith to form two lines, the first made up of the Royals, Ninth, Thirty-eighth,¹ and part of the Fourth; the second of the remainder of the Fourth, the Thirtieth, Fourty-fourth, and Fifty-eighth (the last three being very weak battalions), together with Spry's brigade of Portuguese. The men leaped gladly to their feet, but they had still to wait for some time before Bradford's Portuguese brigade came up on their right. Then Leith at last gave the signal, and the whole strode forward in beautiful order, Wellington himself riding with them for a time between the first and second lines. The French artillery continued to play upon them; and as they drew nearer to the heights the fire of the French skirmishers became destructive, until Leith's light infantry drove them back and forced the guns also to retire to a new position. From their saddles the mounted officers could observe the hostile array, Maucune's battalions being massed in contiguous columns,² with the front rank kneeling, on the heights just fifty yards in rear of the brow where the British would first come into sight. The French were calm and confident, brave men under a brave officer; and not a musket was discharged until the whole burst out in a single volley. A moment later, having gained the crest, Leith gave the order to fire and charge; and with a great shout the British dashed through the smoke with the bayonet. Whether owing to heavy losses or to panic the French columns once again melted into a disorganised mass of flying men.

During this time Pakenham, pushing on after the defeated fragments of Thomières's leading battalions,³

¹ The 1st Batt., which had reached the army on the previous day to take the place of the 2nd Batt. Its colonel, Greville, commanded the 1st Brigade.

² Leith Hay describes them first as squares and afterwards as columns.

³ Two of Thomières's regiments, the 62nd and 101st, were almost annihilated. The third (1st Line) escaped with the loss of

1812, found himself in the presence either of that General's July 22, second brigade or of a part of Maucune's division, which menaced him in front, while some of Curto's squadrons threatened his flank. In the heat of pursuit Wallace's brigade had outmarched its supports and was now brought to an abrupt halt. Pakenham and Wallace, dreading an onset of cavalry, rode up and down the line helping their officers as they told off the men to form square. Arentschild was still following up the body of horse which he had defeated ; but one of D'Urban's Portuguese regiments attempted a charge upon the French infantry and was repulsed. For a brief space Wallace's brigade was utterly at a loss. The dry grass, kindled by innumerable cartridge papers, had burst into flame, turning the warm air of summer into scorching heat, and rolling up dense clouds of suffocating smoke. Tremendous firing could be heard in front. Scattered soldiers of the Fifth Division, lost in the blinding vapour, had blundered into their ranks ; and no man knew what might come next. Presently loud cheering and trampling of horses was heard to the left rear, and the brigade turned half round, expecting an attack, when the smoke rolled away and revealed Le Marchant's heavy dragoons advancing at a canter, with Cotton at their head. They had been ordered to charge as soon as a favourable opportunity should offer itself. Wallace opened his line to let them pass ; the dragoons formed line to their front ; and the French hastily ran to throw themselves into square. Before the evolution was half completed the trumpets sounded the charge, and the heavy brigade crashed down upon the 66th Line of Maucune's brigade. Huddling themselves together as best they could, the French opened a sharp though ineffectual fire, but in an instant the British troopers broke into them and hewed them down with terrible slaughter.

at most no more than one-seventh of its numbers, and, singularly enough, of only four officers. It cannot therefore have been very heavily engaged, and must have escaped the onslaught of the cavalry.

Leaving the prisoners to the care of Leith's division, 1812. Le Marchant rallied his brigade and led them against July 22. the regiment next in rear, the 15th Line. These troops had had more time to collect themselves, and met the onset with a volley that emptied many saddles; but they likewise were utterly dispersed, and fled the way of the 66th.

Still insatiate, Le Marchant pressed on against Brenier's leading regiment, the 22nd, which had just come upon the ground and was forming to cover Maucune's retreat. Though not in square, the 22nd was in good order and reserved its fire until the dragoons were within ten yards, when they poured in a volley which wrought havoc in the leading squadron. But they had waited too long. The dragoons might fall, but their horses could not be stopped; and after a desperate encounter of sabre against bayonet these brave Frenchmen also were driven into flight. Many of the helpless fugitives, spent and bleeding, flung themselves into the ranks of Wallace's brigade for safety and were spared. Hundreds more ran headlong to the shelter of a thin wood on the reverse side of the ridge, which could not, however, protect them. Cotton and his victorious dragoons thundered on, breaking through everything that stood in their way; and one squadron of the Fourth Dragoons under their colonel, Lord Edward Somerset, captured single-handed five guns. Le Marchant himself was killed on the edge of the great forest in rear of the French position. At last with horses blown and exhausted, Cotton left the pursuit to be finished by the Eleventh and Sixteenth Light Dragoons, who had followed the Heavy Brigade over the hill, and by the cavalry of Arentschild and D'Urban. Two squadrons of the French 3rd Hussars endeavoured to impede the chase; but with great difficulty men enough of the German Hussars, Fourteenth, and Portuguese were collected to drive them off, and the French horse was seen no more on that quarter of the field. Anson's brigade pressed on so eagerly

1812. that, wreathed in a cloud of dust, they approached July 22. within close range of a large body of hostile infantry and artillery, but fortunately escaped without loss. The entire attack, as thus far related, occupied less than an hour, and at its close the left wing of the French had been utterly overthrown. The 7th and 5th divisions were for all fighting purposes destroyed, and the 2nd much damaged ; the three of them having lost some four thousand men. Moreover, Pakenham (for Leith had been wounded) with the Third and Fifth Divisions and the whole mass of Wellington's cavalry—one regiment excepted—was reforming line to sweep the entire field from west to east.

It was at the crisis of such a disaster that Clausel was summoned to take the command of the French army ; but fortune had already offered him a chance to save something from the wreck, and he was now to show how great a French general could be in adversity. Simultaneously with the advance of the Fifth Division Wellington had launched Cole's into action immediately upon the left of Bradford's brigade, at the same time ordering Pack's Portuguese to assail the Greater Arapil, so as to relieve Cole of its fire upon his flank during the advance. The Fusilier brigade on the right and Stubbs's Portuguese on the left, making a single line of seven battalions, filed through the village of Arapiles under a terrible cannonade, threw out its markers on the farther side, and having reformed line moved forward steadily against Clausel's division, which was by this time arrayed upon the right of Maucune. Upon reaching the low ground at the foot of the French position Cole perceived on his left front the detached regiment—the 122nd of Bonnet's division—which Marmont had stationed on a low ridge to connect the troops on the Great Arapil with those on the Monte de Azan ; and he noticed also the bulk of Bonnet's division drawn up within supporting distance of it. Stubbs's Portuguese thrust aside the 122nd towards Bonnet's main body ; and

Cole, detaching the 7th Caçadores to hold it in check, 1812. pushed on with the remainder of his line against July 22. Clausel, his battalions suffering much from the enfilading fire of the French guns on the Great Arapil. They pressed on, however, unwaveringly to the summit, where they met the first line—five battalions—of the French, and after a savage duel of musketry drove them back upon their reserves. But meanwhile Pack's attack upon the Greater Arapil had failed. His Portuguese had scrambled up the choking ascent of the hill and were within thirty feet of the top when they were checked by a perpendicular bank. The French then suddenly poured a volley upon them from the rocks, and closing upon them in front and flank with the bayonet, dashed them down to the plain with very heavy loss.

The situation became for a time serious. Cole had been wounded as he reached the crest of the ridge ; his troops were blown and disordered by their attack ; and now three out of four of Bonnet's regiments—the 118th, 119th, and 122nd—sallied out from behind the Greater Arapil upon his left flank. The 7th Caçadores strove gallantly to stem their advance, but were swept away by superior numbers ; and Clausel, having rallied his five defeated battalions upon their reserves, led the whole ten forward to charge the front. The Fourth Division, thinned and exhausted by its effort, was in no state to await the shock. The Portuguese gave way first ; the Fusiliers followed ; and both brigades ran down headlong from the plateau into the plain. Pursuing his success without hesitation, Clausel developed a powerful counter-attack upon Wellington's centre. To Sarrut he committed the task of rallying and shielding the three beaten divisions ; and then summoning Bonnet's three regiments to form upon his right, six squadrons of Boyer's dragoons to cover his right flank, and Ferey's division to advance in his support to the crest of the hill which he had regained, he pushed on in pursuit of Cole's defeated division. The Fortieth,

1812, which had come forward to protect Pack's routed July 22. Portuguese, was thrust back by Bonnet to the Lesser Arapil, but was delivered from further pressure by the British guns on the summit of the hill. The Fusiliers and Stubbs's Portuguese were steadily borne down, and the latter suffered some loss from a charge of Boyer's dragoons, which, however, were beaten off by a square of the 11th Regiment. Some of the French horse even assailed the left flank battalion—the Fifty-third—of the Sixth Division, which was now advancing to the support of the Fourth, and were not repelled before they had inflicted some damage. But the tide was soon about to turn. Beresford, catching up Spry's Portuguese brigade from the second line of the Fifth Division, turned it against Clausel's left flank; and though Beresford himself was wounded in the conflict, he brought the French counter-attack to a standstill.

And now the Sixth Division came striding over the plain to recover the ground that had been first won and then lost by Cole. Hinde's brigade on the right and Hulse's on the left made up the first line, and Rezonde's Portuguese the second line of Clinton's advance; and first the red-coats engaged the nine battalions of Bonnet in a bitter contest of musketry. As usual the British fire prevailed; and presently Bonnet's troops ran back discomfited to the hill in their rear, having lost, since they first came into action, some fifteen hundred men. Their retreat, by uncovering the right flank of Clausel's division, compelled that also to retire; and Wellington now directed his First Division to strike in between Foy and the Greater Arapil, so as at once to cut off Foy's troops from the main body, and to menace the right flank and retreat of Ferey's division on the Monte de Azan. The order, however, was for some reason not obeyed by General Campbell, who appears to have pushed forward only his sharp-shooters of the German Legion. Their advance, however, on the east and the retirement of Clausel's division to west of the Greater Arapil warned the 120th French

regiment, which occupied that height, that it was in 1812. danger of being isolated ; and these three last battalions July 22. of Bonnet's division hastened to rejoin their defeated comrades, not a little galled as they went by the fire of the Germans upon their flank.

Thus Clausel's counter-assault had been disastrously repulsed, and the plight of the French was rapidly becoming desperate. On the plateau Sarrut was fighting fiercely to save the shattered remnants of Marmont's left wing ; but the Third and Fifth Divisions, now formed in one line, with the Seventh Division and Bradford's Portuguese in support, pressed him hard in front, while the cavalry of D'Urban, Arentschild, and Anson manœuvred constantly round his left flank. Thus beset he could not, for all the valour of his troops, but give way, and it was only a question of time before his battalions would join the mob of the fugitives. Practically, therefore, only two divisions were left to Clausel, that of Foy which was fully occupied with the Light and First Divisions in its front, and that of Ferey which, with its face to the west, was holding the crest of a ridge a little to south-east of the Greater Arapil. Warned by Clausel that he must hold back the Allies in his front at all costs, Ferey formed seven of his battalions in line, and covering them on either flank with a single battalion in square, stood firmly at bay. He did not wait long before Clinton, having disposed of Bonnet, came up with his division, his left being now covered by the Fusilier brigade, which had speedily recovered itself and returned again to the front. Without hesitation Clinton led his men up the glacis-like slope of the hill, to be met, when within two hundred yards of Ferey's line, by a deadly tempest of musketry and grape. The red-coats fell very fast but continued to press on slowly and steadily, closing in to fill up the gaps, and answering fire with fire. For an hour this murderous duel continued, the failing light being made good by the incessant blaze of the fusillade and the flames of the dry grass which had been kindled by the

1812. half-burned paper of the cartridges. At last the French July 22. gave way and Ferey withdrew his line, under the protection of the flanking squares, to the very edge of the forest, where his brave men turned and formed a new front.

Clinton's British battalions had suffered so terribly that he brought the Portuguese forward to drive the enemy from this last refuge, while the British guns, which had been unlimbered on the right or northern flank of Ferey's line, raked the French array from end to end. Ferey himself was slain by a round shot, but his men stood firm and repulsed Rezonde's battalions with very heavy loss. The British brigades then replaced the Portuguese in the firing line, but, before they could attack, the Fifth Division, which had been reforming after the dispersal of Sarrut's troops, came up on the enemy's left flank. This last stroke was decisive. The 70th on the extreme French left broke and fled ; the panic spread to the 26th and 77th ; and only the 31st Light stood their ground for a time to cover the flight of their comrades, when they too retired into the forest and disappeared. The Sixth Division was too much exhausted to pursue ; the Seventh, which had hardly been engaged, appears not to have been at hand ; and the Light cavalry had, for some reason, been recalled by Cotton to the ground which it had occupied before the attack, so that no attempt was made to follow up the rout. Within the forest the confusion of the defeated was unspeakable. "Infantry, cavalry, artillery, waggons, carts, baggage-mules, and the reserve-pack, drawn by oxen, were all mingled together ; the men shouting, swearing, running, beyond all control, every one looking only to himself—a regular stampede." There was no command and no commander, for Clausel, who had been wounded in the foot, was in the hands of the surgeons at Alba ; and only the 31st Light, of the whole of the French centre and left, still bore themselves, to their undying praise, as soldiers. Had Carlos d'España but stuck to his post at Alba and barred

the access to the bridge, the whole of this mass of 1812.
fugitives must have surrendered.

July 22.

There still remained Foy's division, which, half an hour before sunset, had been ordered by Clausel to cover the flank of the retreat and delay pursuit to the utmost of its power. Foy fell back accordingly, shielding the movement with a cloud of skirmishers, and turning to account every piece of advantageous ground with consummate skill. Wellington in person followed him with the First and Light Divisions and Anson's brigade of cavalry, but was unable to break his array.

At one moment it seemed certain that Foy must be cut off from the main body; but, on reaching the last point of vantage at the edge of the forest, he increased the number of his sharp-shooters, and made a menace of counter-attack which caused the British artillery to unlimber and the infantry to form for an assault. Maintaining a heavy fire till the last moment he withdrew his men under cover of the smoke, and turning south-east retreated upon Alba de Tormes. Wellington, ignorant that Carlos d'España had evacuated that place, pressed the pursuit north-eastward to Huerta, where the Light Division bivouacked at eleven o'clock at night. He sent a part of the cavalry down towards Alba nevertheless; and in returning from the river Cotton had the misfortune to ride into a Portuguese picquet, by the fire of which he was severely wounded. However Arentschild's brigade ascertained positively that the French had crossed the Tormes at Alba, and conveyed the information to Wellington.

At daybreak the chase was resumed with the same July 23.
troops, reinforced by Bock's and Anson's brigades of cavalry. The Tormes was passed at Huerta; and the whole force, headed by the cavalry, was directed upon Peñeranda. The way lay along a bad stony road through a narrow marshy valley, and it was not until two o'clock that the advanced cavalry regained sight of the enemy's horse retiring from the village of Garcia Hernandez. A battery of French horse-artillery,

1812, which was with them, unlimbered on a height to July 22, north-east of the village and opened fire on the Allied dragoons, while three battalions of the 76th Line and 6th Light formed squares on the slopes below. Wellington, at the first sight of the cavalry and before he was aware of the presence of infantry and artillery, ordered Anson and Bock to attack, which Anson at once did, driving back the enemy's left wing of horse, but leaving behind him two hostile squadrons, which were moving close to the heights and within range of the squares formed beneath them. The German dragoons, who had only just emerged from a defile and were therefore still in column, now came galloping up, anxious not to be left out of the fight and hoping to complete their formation into line as they moved. The first squadron to come forward was that of Captain Haltorf, with Bock himself at its head, who seeing two squadrons of French before him charged at once without waiting for the rest of the brigade. The French, however, declined the combat and retired; and the Germans suffered some loss both from artillery-fire during their advance, and from the musketry of the squares of infantry upon their left flank, as they pursued. The attack therefore failed, but meanwhile the third squadron of the same regiment under Captain Gustavus van der Decken had galloped up; and he, finding himself likewise galled by the fusillade upon his left flank, wheeled instantly to the left, and bore down upon the nearest square to him—that of the 76th of the French line. Within eighty yards the squadron received a first volley from the enemy. Several men and horses fell; and Decken himself, being struck by a bullet on the knee, after a desperate struggle to keep his seat reeled fainting from the saddle to the ground. Captain von Usslar Gleichen instantly took his place, and the squadron, unchecked and unbroken, thundered on. A second volley met them at close range; another officer and several more men dropped down; but one horse, stricken to the death,

leaped high into the air and crashed down upon the 1812 bayonets. In a moment the dragoons had poured into July 22. the gap, huge men upon huge horses, and were hewing right and left with all the havoc of the sword. The square was transformed from an array of brave soldiers into a shrinking mass of terrified men, running frantically to escape one-sixth of their number of assailants.¹ It is said that not above fifty men escaped death or capture ; and the statement would seem to be true.²

While this slaughter was going forward the second squadron under Captain von Reitzenstein came up on the right of Decken, wheeled clear of him to its left, and galloped straight at the 6th Light, the two battalions of which were moving off in column to gain a more commanding position on the summit of the height. Their colonel appears to have lost his head ; for, instead of giving the word to form square, he ordered the head of the column to increase its pace, an infallible expedient for widening the gaps between the sections, but a very uncertain method of evading an onslaught of galloping horse. Reitzenstein speedily overtook them, whereupon the two rear companies under Captain Philippe with great coolness faced about and fired a volley which killed or wounded two subalterns and several men. But the squadron was not to be stopped, and dashing into the flank of the disordered column overthrew or captured great numbers. Many of the defeated ran to the top of the hill, where they joined the fugitives of the 76th and some of the French cavalry which had rallied ; but by this time the leading squadron of the 2nd regiment of Hanoverian dragoons had come up, which promptly dispersed the

¹ The returns of 15th July show the 1st battalion of the 76th as 29 officers and 671 men ; those of the 1st of August at 18 officers and 313 men. It is impossible to say what may have been the loss of the battalion between the 15th and 23rd ; but if the whole of it was in square on the 23rd it is plain that more than 50 (the number given by Schwertfeger) must have escaped.

² Mr. Omar has ascertained that practically every officer was captured.

1812. French horse and broke up the mass of infantry once July 22. more, before it could range itself in order. Meanwhile Foy had halted, formed part of his infantry into squares, and unlimbered some of his guns ; and the broken remains of the 6th fled for refuge to the nearest square, which was composed of the 69th. Mad with success Marschalck led his Hanoverians, with ragged ranks and breathless horses, against this infantry also, but was beaten back with the loss of two officers and several men ; and the action came to an end after lasting for about forty minutes. The chase was then resumed by Anson's brigade, which gathered up several more prisoners ; though on the following day Anson seems to have missed, through excessive caution, an opportunity for striking another telling blow.¹ Then, however, the pursuit came to an end ; for Clausel hastened his retreat with astonishing speed, and the Allies were so greatly exhausted that they could not hope to overtake him. Accordingly, on the 25th at Flores de Avila Wellington called a halt.

So ended the battle and pursuit of Salamanca, which General Foy in his journal characterised as sufficient to raise Wellington almost to the level of Marlborough, being the most skilful, the most considerable in point of numbers engaged, and the most important in its results that the British had won in modern times. Marmont always averred that he never intended to fight a general action, and that, had he not been disabled, there would have been no battle. Beyond question Marmont's wound, which came from a solitary cannon-shot fired almost at random, was a singular piece of good fortune for the Allies at the outset ; but it cannot be accepted as exonerating Marmont from blame, nor as justifying the Marshal in attempting to shuffle the responsibility of the defeat upon Clausel. "It was the Duke of Ragusa who began the battle," wrote Foy, "and began it against Clausel's advice. His left was already driven back when he was wounded, and from that moment it

¹ Tomkinson, p. 191.

was impossible either to decline the action or to give a 1812. good turn to it. The only thing to do was to diminish July 22. the scale of the disaster, and that Clause^l did. Things would have gone no better even if Marmont had never been wounded." The fact seems to be that, though Marmont would not for the world have attacked Wellington on ground of Wellington's choice, he had no idea that the British general could do more than defend a position. The French army and its officers flattered themselves that they alone understood how to manœuvre ; and Marmont, who could handle large bodies of troops with masterly skill, appears to have thought that, so long as he dazzled his adversary by brilliant movements, he incurred no danger. He did not deceive Wellington, who wrote contemptuously of Marmont's "manceuvring all the morning in the usual French style, nobody knew with what object" ; but he did deceive himself, for all this parade of tactical dexterity was simply a mask for his own irresolution. Wellington was of opinion that the Marshal should have "given him a golden bridge" and have been content to see the Allies retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo ; and this is what Massena in Marmont's place would undoubtedly have done. The strength of the contending armies was too nearly equal to justify the commander of either of them in risking a general engagement, unless his adversary were guilty of some flagrant blunder. But Massena in adversity had the courage of his reputation, and Marmont had not. The Duke of Ragusa was not content to do the right thing. He wanted, as he himself says, a rear-guard action. This, though he did not confess it, meant some small affair wherein without any risk he could inflict a little damage, and which, by multiplying Wellington's casualties tenfold, he could expand into a victory that would make a figure in the *Moniteur*. He was therefore tempted on the 22nd to keep nibbling at the ground before him with his left wing, until he had committed that wing beyond rescue or recall, and was fairly caught

1812. in the act before he could correct the mistake. His July 22. generals also appear to have shared so thoroughly his opinion as to Wellington's impotence for the offensive that, even when Pakenham was in full march to the attack, they failed to realise his intention.

Once past the period of anarchy which intervened between the fall of Marmont and Bonnet, and the assumption by Clausel of the command, the French made a very fine fight; and no praise can be too high for Clausel's superb effort to change the fortune of the day. The weather was hot and dry, the sun and wind, as it chanced, were both in the faces of the French, and the troops were so choked with heat and dust that great exertions could hardly have been expected from them even with the certainty of victory, much less after one-fourth of their numbers had been ridden over and trampled under foot in the extremity of rout. Yet the 3rd, 4th, and 8th divisions fought with admirable tenacity; and the 1st, under the excellent leadership of Foy, showed perfect coolness and resolution when covering the retreat. Nevertheless the losses of the French were very heavy. Comparison of the returns of the Army of Portugal on the 15th of July and the 1st of August¹ shows a difference of over two hundred officers, over nine thousand men, over two thousand horses and twenty guns; but it is very certain that this does not represent the whole of the casualties. A return given by Napier² states the loss between the 10th of July and the 10th of August at over twelve thousand men, nearly twelve hundred horses, and twelve guns;³ which, if fifteen

¹ See Appendix.

² I cannot find the original of this return, and I imagine that it does not exist in the form in which he presents it, but was compiled from other returns; though as a rule these were made out fortnightly on the 1st and 15th of each month.

³ Killed or taken, 162 officers, 3867 men; wounded, 232 officers, 7529 men; stragglers (missing), 645. Total, 12,435 of all ranks. 1190 horses. I can find no British return of the prisoners taken. Wellington talks vaguely of 7000, but says that he has no certain knowledge. This figure is certainly too high.

hundred men be deducted as casualties before and 1812. after the action of the 22nd, will leave about eleven July 22. thousand for the battle itself. But this figure is probably too low. The first account sent to Paris reckoned the losses in the week of the 22nd at fifteen to eighteen thousand, and Clarke, on the authority of a staff-officer from the Army of Portugal, reported them to Napoleon as at least twelve thousand.¹ We shall be within the mark in accepting fourteen thousand as the least number. Among the wounded were Marmont, Bonnet, Clausel, and Menne ; among the mortally wounded or killed Ferey, Thomières, and Desgraviers. Thus the Commander-in-Chief and three out of eight divisional generals were slain or disabled ; another was wounded, but not disabled, one general of brigade was killed, and another severely hurt. Among the trophies lost to the Allies were twenty guns, two eagles, the one belonging to the 22nd and the other to the 101st of the Line,² and six other colours.

The loss of the Allies on the 22nd amounted to over five thousand two hundred of all ranks killed and wounded and missing ;³ the proportion of Portuguese to British being as two to three, and the proportion of Spanish so minute as to be negligible. Among the general officers Le Marchant was killed, immediately after an angry altercation with Cotton ; Leith, Cole, Cotton,

¹ *Arch. Nationales.* Comm. de Police Devillière (Bayonne) to Savary, 9th Aug.; Clarke to Napoleon, 22nd Aug. 1812.

² The number of captured guns once again is left vague, and is usually returned at 12 ; but I judge from the return already quoted. Some accounts give the numbers of eagles captured as 3, and one narrative specifies that of the 66th as taken.

³ Napier's return is incomplete and incorrectly added up.

		Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.
British officers .	.	28	178	0
" men .	:	360	2536	74
Portuguese officers .	.	13	74	1
" men .	.	291	1478	181
Spaniards (men)	.	2	4	0
Total .	.	694	4270	256 = 5220

1812. Beresford and Victor Alten were wounded severely, July 22. Collins, who commanded a brigade in the Portuguese service, mortally ; and Wellington at the end of the day was struck on the thigh by a spent bullet which had passed through his holster. Among the troops engaged the casualties of Hulse's brigade of the Sixth Division were incomparably the heaviest. The Sixty-first lost twenty-four officers and three hundred and forty-two men killed and wounded ; the Eleventh sixteen officers and three hundred and twenty-five men, a proportion in each case of at least two in three ; while the Fifty-third lost eleven officers and one hundred and thirty-one men killed and wounded, or nearly if not quite one-half of the number present.¹ The casualties of the brigade therefore amounted at the very least to over four men in seven, and almost certainly to more ; while those of the Eleventh and Sixty-first together rose to at least seven men in ten, or a trifle higher than that of the Fifty-seventh at Albuera. Napier indeed says that at the close of the day not above one hundred and sixty of all ranks of these two battalions were left standing, in which case they must have lost seven men out of every nine ; but be it noted that in neither battalion was a man returned as missing. Full justice has not yet been done to these heroes of Gloucester and Devon. The remaining brigade of Clinton's division suffered far less severely ; but the Royal Scots, Seventh, Thirty-second, Thirty-eighth, Fortieth and Eighty-eighth all lost over one hundred officers and men. Many of the

¹ The following are the details :

Present 15th July,	11th, 34 off., 485 N.C.O. and men	all ranks, 1396
2/53rd, 25 "	316 " "	

Casualties, 22nd July—

11th,	killed,	1 off.,	44 N.C.O. and men.
wounded,	15 "	281	" "
2/53rd, killed,		26	" "
wounded,	11 "	105	" "
1/61st, killed,	5 "	39	" "
wounded,	19 "	303	" "
Total of all ranks,		849.	

British and German battalions had hardly a man touched, 1812. and there were no fewer than twenty-seven which had July 22. been but lightly engaged, their aggregate losses being no more than half of those that fell in Hulse's brigade alone. In fact to all intents the whole of the work was done by four divisions only of the infantry, aided by four brigades of cavalry and of course by artillery ; or in other words the whole of Marmont's army, little inferior in numbers generally and with seventy-eight guns against sixty, was beaten by one-half of the Allies. The fact is so striking that it merits a little examination.

There is no occasion to dilate further on Marmont's tactical blunder in extending his left wing beyond reach of support, or on Wellington's swiftness in taking advantage of the fault ; nor is it necessary to do more than mention the undoubted fact, admitted by Foy himself, that the fall of darkness alone saved the French army from absolute destruction. It is very clear that at the first onset Wallace's brigade of the Third Division carried everything before it on the French left ; that it far outstripped Ellis's brigade, which was in support of it ; and that for a moment, upon finding itself confronted with Maucune's division, it thought itself lost. At the critical moment, however, the terrific onslaught of Le Marchant's heavy cavalry saved the situation, and elicited from Wellington the remark, "By God, Cotton, I never saw anything so beautiful in my life ; the day is *yours*." Leith's division made its attack in front simultaneously with Pakenham's in flank ; and here again the leading brigade, Greville's, did all the work, the five battalions of the rear brigade losing little more than seventy men out of some eighteen to nineteen hundred. Now, however, came the check. Pack's Portuguese failed in their assault upon the Greater Arapil ; and Cole's onset was in consequence beaten back for the time. It was the fashion among the British to blame the Portuguese for their defeat, and to declare that they were responsible for the incompleteness of the

1812. victory ;¹ but Napier and Leith-Hay both acquit Pack's July 22. brigade of any misconduct—very justly, as it seems to me—and Napier goes so far as to say that the assault upon the Greater Arapil was of doubtful expediency. There seems to be some force in the criticism, for the French guns on the hill were easily silenced by the troop of horse-artillery attached to the Seventh Division ; and it is not clear why Dickson's brigade of heavy howitzers, which was close at hand and hardly engaged at all, was not employed to keep down the fire of the French infantry on the summit. It is noteworthy that Wellington complained of the outranging of his guns by the French cannon, and wrote to ask for heavier metal ; though, as a matter of fact, three long eighteen-pounders, which were with the army, were not brought to the front, but were held ready to be sent off early in case of a retreat.²

To return, however, to the main point. After the repulse of Pack, Cole's first brigade was beaten back, and consequently his second brigade became seriously engaged ; but his division was saved, as we have seen, by the withdrawal of Spry's Portuguese from the Fifth Division at Beresford's order. This points to the probability that the second line of the Fifth Division was not pushing on in support of the first line to complete the success, otherwise there seems to be no reason why it should not have acted with effect upon the flank of Maucune. The fall of Leith may perhaps account for this. However, Cole's leading brigade rallied, and presently it was relieved by the Sixth Division, which Wellington sent forward for the purpose. Once again Clinton's British brigades did the whole of the work, losing twelve hundred out of twenty-eight hundred men ; and, since Wellington had still three divisions of infantry and two brigades of cavalry ready to his hand, it is by no means easy to understand why he

¹ See the comments of Grattan and Cooke.

² *Dickson Papers*, chap. iv. pp. 681-682, 686, 695. *Wellington Desp.* To Bathurst, 24th July 1812.

did not send at least a brigade to support Clinton. 1812.
At the same time it must be admitted that his con- July 22.
templated stroke upon the French right, which he had committed to the First Division, may have been in his mind when he kept so large a body of infantry in reserve, and it has never been explained why Campbell did not act upon his orders. It is extremely probable that, had Graham been still in command of the First Division, the victory would have been far more decisive.

To sum up, the general result of our examination is that seventy-four French battalions and twenty-three squadrons with seventy-eight guns were utterly beaten by twenty-eight British battalions¹ and as many Portuguese, of no greater average strength, and twenty-six squadrons with sixty guns. It is true that the French were taken at great tactical disadvantage, and that they were cruelly unfortunate in the fall of their chief and second in command; yet even so the fact is astonishing. But while Salamanca must remain a marvellous example of the powers of the British infantry in attack, there lies behind it always the question why, given such superiority of moral force, Wellington did not accomplish more. The answer is, I think, to be found in the fact that rightly or wrongly, but in all likelihood rightly, he directed nearly every movement in person. We know positively that he himself galloped to Pakenham to give him his orders, instead of sending an aide-de-camp, that he not only gave Leith verbal instructions but rode with his division during part of its advance; and that he also spoke with his own mouth to Cole. It seems also that he was on the spot when Cotton delivered his charge,² and it is certain that he

¹ I have included among the British all that had 20 casualties and upwards; and among the Portuguese Bradford's and Pack's brigades, and the 4 brigades attached to the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th divisions. Of the British thus included 5 battalions at least had only a few companies engaged; and the same is no doubt true of the Portuguese; but I am anxious to be guilty of no exaggeration.

² *Memoirs of Viscount Combermere*, i. 274.

1812. personally directed the advance of the Sixth Division, July 22. and took immediate command of the First and Light Divisions for their final movement at the close of the day, riding so far to the front as to be dangerously exposed. It may be objected that these are not the duties of a Commander-in-Chief. That, in a general way, is true; but equally it is not the duty of a captain of a ship to stand by the side of the officer of the watch in mid-ocean, and yet very often he will find it prudent to do so. In the first place all accounts of the battle agree that the smoke and the dust, especially the latter, were blinding; and we have seen how Anson's brigade, even on the outskirts of the fight, was completely lost, and after halting found itself within easy range of a French battery. The ground had dried rapidly; troops were continuously in motion on both sides; and it must frequently have been impossible to make out at any distance what was going forward. Secondly, it must be remembered that this was Wellington's first offensive action against European troops; that he was meeting a great master of manœuvre in command of soldiers who had conquered all other armies, and that by an unfortunate chance the best of his divisional commanders and brigadiers were absent through wounds or sickness. It is not surprising, therefore, that at the outset he should have taken upon himself the personal direction of every movement; and to judge by the use made by divisional leaders of their supports, it was a pity that he could not have kept his hand upon them throughout. At every crisis of the battle he was in the right place doing the right thing, even as he was three years later at Waterloo; but the general conduct of the action necessarily suffered in consequence. At Waterloo he was so busy superintending the work of others that he had not a moment to order up Hill's force from Hal; and at Salamanca for the same reason he had not leisure to turn a great success into a decisive victory.

A word must be added as to the part played by the cavalry in the actions of the 22nd and 23rd. Beyond

question the attack of Le Marchant's brigade was a very brilliant stroke, produced great results, and was not marred apparently by the headlong galloping which had brought disaster in many minor actions, and was to be still more fatal at Waterloo. The three regiments suffered little, comparatively speaking, their losses amounting to just one hundred ; but this was due to the vigour of their onslaught upon body after body of infantry, when the slightest hesitation would have been disastrous. The day of Salamanca therefore rightly remains one of the great days in the history of the British horse ; though their achievements must always sink into insignificance when compared with the performance of Bock's dragoons on the following day. The name of Garcia Hernandez will always be included among the great achievements of cavalry in the history of the world ; and too much praise cannot be given to the brave Germans who made the combat a military classic. Four squadrons only, each about one hundred and ten strong, were engaged, though no two of them together ; and three of them made successful charges, one upon a square fully formed of at least five hundred infantry ; another upon a moving column of twice that strength ; and the third upon a half-formed mass of beaten cavalry and infantry. The most striking point in the affair is the perfect control which the officers held over their men, the quickness with which they decided upon their attack, and the promptitude with which they translated decision into action. An English squadron in the place of Decken's would probably have started off at twice the speed, and, when called upon to wheel suddenly to the left, would have squandered itself over three hundred yards of front, with the result that it would either have reached the square in disorder or must have reduced its pace and reformed its ranks, giving the enemy time to set their teeth, close their array, and probably to receive the troopers with three volleys instead of two. If Decken had failed it is likely enough that Reitzenstein and Marschalck would have hesitated

1812. to commit themselves, and then the French might have July 22. escaped with little difficulty or loss. But in this famous brigade every officer of every squadron knew his business perfectly and could do it, while their men would follow them wherever they would lead ; and hence this astonishing overthrow of some fifteen hundred infantry by less than one-third their number of horse. The losses of the four squadrons were heavy, amounting to six officers, one hundred and twenty-one men and one hundred and forty-four horses killed, wounded and missing ; but it is reasonable to suppose that but for Marschalck's final attack upon the 69th, the casualties would have been less by fully one-fourth. Even as things were, however, it was not a very high price to pay for the destruction or capture of several hundred of the enemy.¹

Lastly, before taking leave of this great battle, one other small point must be noticed. In the despatch which reported the victory, Wellington as usual gave liberal thanks to all his principal officers, not excluding Carlos D'Espana who had so miserably deceived him as to Alba de Tormes ; and ended with a commendation, hitherto unknown in documents of that nature, of the work of the civil departments. The good service of the Principal Medical Officer, Dr. M'Grigor, he had mentioned for the first time by M'Grigor's request in a supplementary letter after the fall of Badajoz ; he now testified further to his attention and ability. But there is another sentence which probably gave to a few obscure individuals more intense pleasure than was felt by anyone else named in the document. " Notwithstanding the increased distance of our operations from our magazines, and that the country is completely exhausted, we have hitherto wanted nothing, owing to

¹ The number of prisoners taken by Bock's brigade is very uncertain. Beamish and Schwertfeger state it at 1400 ; but I think that this figure is too high. I may add that the number of casualties of the brigade as printed in the *Gazette* and by Beamish differ from that given by Schwertfeger. I have followed the last.

the diligence and attention of the Commissary-general, 1812. Mr. Bissett, and the officers of the department under July 22. his direction." Wellington never used stronger words (except in wrath) than were absolutely necessary; otherwise diligence and attention might seem to be mild terms to explain Bissett's conquest of difficulties. With no fewer than thirty-seven separate depots in Portugal to be regulated; a larger commissariat establishment than had ever been known for a British army; Spanish muleteers who would not provide, if they knew it, for Portuguese troops at the front; Portuguese bullock-carts and worse still Portuguese roads in rear; a staff undermanned and overworked; accounts in consequence eighteen months in arrear; no power to promote or to punish (for he was not substantive Commissary-in-chief, but only acting until the return of his predecessor Kennedy); and above all the frightful gnawing anxiety over the dearth of specie, it seems wonderful that his brain should not have given way. Yet he never lost his head. With a supply of Spanish couriers to ride on his errands, he maintained his hold upon every underling attached to the army and every clerk in charge of the depots; and by hook or by crook he kept the army supplied. It is well sometimes to turn from the man who fights—and gains all the glory—to the man who feeds him and gains none; to the man without whom, indeed, there can be neither marching nor fighting, but through whose patient indefatigable service a Commander-in-Chief may say in a barren country that his army has wanted for nothing.

CHAPTER XVI

1812. ON the very day when Wellington invested the forts July 17. of Salamanca the President and Congress of the United States passed an Act declaring war against Great Britain. The news did not come as a surprise to the authorities in Canada ; for the arrogant speeches of American orators, already quoted in a previous chapter, had left little doubt as to the general drift of American policy ; and as early as in January 1812 the Governor had perceived the necessity for making preparations against an attack in the ensuing summer. But to understand the nature of these preparations it is necessary first to sketch very briefly the actual condition of the Colony and the nature of the frontier which separated it from its powerful neighbour.

Canada at this period was divided into two provinces : Lower Canada, which extended from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the Ottawa River, with the seat of Government at Montreal ; and Upper Canada, which name covered the whole of the country to north and westward of the Ottawa, with the seat of Government at York, the modern Toronto. The Lower province with a population of two hundred and fifty to three hundred thousand was practically French, and at this period by no means well affected. The people were not unnaturally fascinated by the supremacy to which France had attained under the leadership of Napoleon ; they conceived the great Emperor to be irresistible, and, deeming that it could be only a matter of time before he became master of Canada, they thought to curry

favour with him by making themselves obnoxious to 1812. the British. They possessed what are called free institutions and had no grievance whatever ; but the ties of blood and of race drew them strongly to Napoleon's side ; and, if the Emperor could have landed four or five thousand men with plenty of muskets, he would have mastered Lower Canada with little trouble.¹ It was, however, by no means so certain that the French colonists would view with equanimity an invasion of Americans. There was of course always the danger lest, if armed to resist such invasion, they might use their weapons first to shake off British rule, without thought of ulterior consequences ; but it was more probable that a good number at any rate would come out readily to defend their homes against the troops of so insolent and boastful a body as the American Congress.

The people of Upper Canada were very widely different. They did not number eighty thousand ; but about half of them were Loyalists who had been driven from their homes by the victorious party in the United States at the close of the War of Independence. They had been the cream of the population of the American Colonies, and had brought to their new homes, besides the qualities which had raised them to eminence in their former country, a very bitter feeling towards their aforetime countrymen. They did not consider that they had been beaten in the struggle : they felt with perfect justice that, without the help of France, the disloyal and revolutionary party would not have prevailed in 1781 ; and now that that same party had again allied itself with France—the tyrannous France of Napoleon—to harry them once more, they asked for nothing better than the opportunity of meeting their ancient enemies in fair fight.

The regular troops in the Canadas at this time consisted of the Eighth, Forty-first, Forty-ninth and Hundredth Regiments of the British line, and the Tenth Royal Veteran battalion. There were also three battalions

¹ Tupper's *Life of Brock*, pp. 75-76.

1812. of Provincial Fencibles, the Newfoundland and the Canadian, both of them dating from 1803, and the Glengarry, which last had been raised in December 1811 from among the Highland settlers, and, being composed mainly of Roman Catholics, was on that account the more acceptable to the French colonists. The four regular regiments were not far from four thousand strong, and in fair order ; but from the necessity of splitting many of them up into small detachments to cover the posts on the frontier, it was difficult to keep the soldiers for long in good discipline. A battalion in Upper Canada was generally divided among eight different stations several hundred miles asunder, and remained thus scattered as a rule for three years until relieved. American agents, many of them the lowest of the low, swarmed around these posts, contrasting the rations and pay of the American Army with the humble allowances meted out to the British. In 1803 the tendency to relaxed discipline, and the effort of a well-meaning but narrow-minded officer to check it by extreme severity, had resulted in a mutinous plot in the Forty-ninth, for which seven men had suffered death. Colonel Brock, who commanded that regiment, had thereupon recommended the formation of a Veteran battalion for duty in the outlying posts, to be composed of selected men of good character, who should be tempted to attach themselves to the country by a grant of two hundred acres of land apiece. The Tenth Royal Veterans, nearly seven hundred strong, had been sent out in 1807 with the idea of fulfilling these conditions. The Forty-ninth, when its companies were brought together, soon recovered itself ; the Eighth was already in excellent order ; the Forty-first was a stout battalion of old soldiers, but unfortunate in its colonel ; and the Hundredth was made up of fine young Protestant Irishmen, not ill-disciplined but a little wild. Altogether the Regulars, Veterans and Fencibles composed a by no means contemptible force of from six to seven thousand men.

The enormous length of the frontier, however, made 1812. such small numbers almost ridiculous, while its extraordinary nature practically compelled dispersion of force. The five inland seas, called by courtesy lakes, which formed the northern boundary between the United States and Canada, of necessity turned any war between the two countries into a maritime struggle, with the additional complication that, though these waters could carry the largest ships, the rapids of the St. Lawrence, which river formed to all intents the frontier for another five hundred miles, forbade vessels to enter the lakes, or indeed to penetrate beyond Montreal, from the sea. Naval stations were therefore essential upon the lakes themselves ; and, since the Falls of Niagara closed the passage between Ontario and Erie, it was obvious that there must be at least one such station on each side of those falls. Even this was not all. The roads of that day were so bad as to be practically impassable except when frozen hard in winter ; and therefore this same line of waters became the only means by which the supplies and stores of an army could be brought forward. Hence a chain of posts was essential to guard all narrow channels and to maintain communication between the more important stations, whether naval or commercial, which were studded along the waterway.

Let us now proceed to follow the lines of supply for both contending parties. If the Americans had had the foresight to build never so small a navy they might have harried our shipping on the ocean very seriously, and made the transport of troops and supplies most irksome ; but being even more ignorant and foolish, if possible, than the English in all matters of war, they had neglected to make any such preparations and were powerless for grave mischief. Practically therefore there was free access from the British Isles across the Atlantic to Quebec, the key of Canada and the main base of the English operations. This was the only permanent fortification in the theatre of war ; but, though it had been recently repaired and strengthened,

1812. it was in no condition to resist a vigorous and well-conducted siege. The supreme importance of Quebec compelled the employment of a strong garrison to guard it ; and consequently a full third of the regular force—twenty-four hundred rank and file—was there shut up. Nominally there were sixty thousand militia that could be called out for the defence of Lower Canada ; but only two thousand of these had received any training, and the remainder were a mere mob ; nor at the outset of the war were there more than four hundred spare muskets and twelve hundred thousand cartridges.

The first post above Quebec was Fort William Henry, about one hundred miles distant, at the junction of the Richelieu with the St. Lawrence. This was the most valuable station on the southern shore as a depot of stores and as a rendezvous for the shipping required for the defence of the St. Lawrence ; and its value was the greater because there were several excellent defensive positions below it, where an enemy moving by either bank could be checked on the march to Quebec. It was therefore made proof against any sudden or irregular attack, and held by four companies of the Hundredth. Fifty miles up the Richelieu and south of Fort William Henry was the frontier post of St. John at the head of the navigation of Lake Champlain, which was held by two companies as a place of observation only, the fortifications being in ruins and otherwise untenable. Half-way between these two was the supporting post of Chambly, which, being a place of assembly and a depot of arms for the militia, was occupied by three hundred irregulars and a detachment of the Royal Artillery, with two guns. The last military station in Lower Canada was Montreal, the commercial capital, which was without any means of defence, its security depending on the maintenance of an impenetrable line between Chambly on the Richelieu and La Prairie on the St. Lawrence, together with an adequate flotilla upon both rivers. Here were stationed the Forty-ninth Foot and a battery of light artillery. Twelve thousand militia were nomin-

ally at hand to aid in the defence, but, with the exception ^{1812.} of six hundred under training, all were ill-armed and ill-disciplined.

Passing the boundary into Upper Canada, the first and most important post was Kingston, which commanded not only the head of the navigation of the St. Lawrence by boat, but also the communications between the two provinces. Moreover the Americans were in force on the opposite shore, with an excellent port, Sackett's Harbour, and a populous country at the back of it ; whereas the Canadian militia at disposal did not exceed fifteen hundred men. It was therefore essential that Kingston, whose normal garrison was but four companies of Veterans, should be held in strength. One hundred and fifty miles to west of Kingston on the northern shore stood York, the best situation in Upper Canada as a depot of stores and a naval base ; but, when the war broke out, it was still unfortified, and the three companies of the Forty-first, which formed the garrison, had only fifteen hundred militia to back them. Then came a chain of small posts to guard the communications between Lakes Ontario and Erie : Fort George, a temporary work of little strength, Chippewa, and Fort Erie, which absorbed between them four or five companies. Over against them on the opposite side of the strait the Americans equally had their chain of posts, Forts Niagara and Schlosser, Black Rock, and Buffalo Creek. Beyond, at the western end of Lake Erie, came Fort Amherstburg, the dockyard and marine arsenal for the Upper Lakes, defended by field-works, which had been recently repaired, and held by about one hundred and fifty regular infantry and artillery ; the militia within call numbering about five hundred. The American counter-work to this was Fort Detroit on the other side of the strait which leads from Lake Erie to Lake Huron. Lastly, at the north-western head of Huron was a block-house enclosed by strong picquets on the island of St. Joseph's, which lies across the outlet from Lake Huron to Lake Superior. This was a mere place of assembly for

1812. Indians and was garrisoned by sixty or seventy infantry and artillery. On the outlet into Lake Michigan the British had no post, the Americans dominating the channel with the fort of Mackinac.¹

To turn to the Americans, their first important objective would be Montreal, to which the old waterway by the Hudson, Lake George, and Lake Champlain led them by a direct and familiar line. Or, if they preferred to sever Upper from Lower Canada at Kingston, they had the alternative route by the Mohawk and Lake Oneida to Oswego on the south shore of Lake Ontario, and so by water to the principal naval base at Sackett's Harbour. Thus they enjoyed the enormous advantage of being able from their single base at Albany to strike the British line of communications at two vital points ; and indeed if they managed their affairs with any energy, they might at the very outset compel the evacuation of Upper Canada and the withdrawal of all British troops to Kingston. American naval superiority upon Lake Champlain, which should have been easy of attainment, was practically all that was required. In the most favourable circumstances the British could only hold Upper Canada with the help of the Indians ; and, in spite of all the "dangerous delusive nonsense" talked during the American War of Independence about the employment of Indians by either side, it was now recognised that they could not be excluded from the struggle, and that, if they were not secured by the one party, they would assuredly be taken over by the other. The possession of Detroit and Mackinac to all intent assured the adherence of the Indians to the United States ; and by way of the river Maumee the Americans had direct access to the western head of Lake Erie, from which they could, with naval superiority, either overwhelm the post of Amherstburg or take the British forts on the Niagara River in rear. The entire game, in fact, was in their hands ; and they fully realised it. "The

¹ These details are drawn chiefly from Prevost's report on the defence of Canada. To Sec. of State, 18th May 1812.

acquisition of Canada this year," wrote Jefferson, "as 1812, far as the neighbourhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching."

Let us now see what preparations the United States had made for this triumphant march. The establishment of the American Army in peace was ten thousand men, of which number there were in June 1812 nearly seven thousand upon the muster-rolls. Congress had authorised the levying of twenty-five thousand additional regular troops, making with engineers and artificers a nominal total of nearly thirty-seven thousand men. But of the new levies at that date not above five thousand recruits had been enlisted ; the whole of these troops were of inferior quality, and their officers were not much better than themselves. Of militia the United States had of course a boundless quantity, of which one hundred thousand had been summoned by the President in April ; but, as they could only be called out for terms of three months at the most, it was useless to look to them for prolonged work in the field. The country therefore fell back, in true English fashion, upon volunteers, whom the President was authorised, subject to the approval of the volunteers themselves, to organise upon the model of the Regular Army and to provide with officers. As to commanders the American Government relied upon veterans of the War of Independence, selecting them rather for political than military reasons, and therefore appointing as senior general James Dearborn, and among the brigadiers William Hull, neither of whom had given a thought to military affairs for thirty years. As far as naval matters were concerned, the United States possessed a small corps of highly efficient officers; but so little had the true meaning of the war been realised that alike on Lake Erie, on Lake Ontario, and on Lake Champlain, the British naval force, though insignificant, was superior.

For on the British side, though not in the highest place, there was, what was lacking to the Americans, a man. The Governor of Lower Canada and the Commander-

1812. in-Chief of the whole Colony was Sir George Prevost, whom we saw last at Dominica in 1805 and at Martinique in 1809, a good and skilful soldier, and still under fifty years of age. The first task set to him had been the choice of a civil administrator and Commander-in-Chief for Upper Canada, and he had made the excellent appointment of Brigadier-general Isaac Brock, late the commandant of the Forty-ninth Foot. A Guernseyman by birth, Brock had seen service first in North Holland in 1799, and then with Nelson at Copenhagen; and in 1802 he had sailed with his regiment for Canada, where he had visited all the military posts and thoroughly grasped the military situation. In 1806 he had succeeded for a time to the supreme command of the troops in both provinces, and had seized the opportunity to effect various reforms. First and foremost he had placed all marine business in the hands of the Quartermaster-general's department, in default of a proper naval authority, and had issued orders that at every station a certain number of boats should be kept ready for instant service. It was therefore by his forethought that the British possessed naval supremacy upon the Lakes in 1812. In 1807, anticipating war in consequence of the affray between the *Leopard* and the *Chesapeake*, he repaired the fortifications of Quebec. Upon the arrival of Sir James Craig in October 1807 he remained as second in command of the troops in Lower Canada, and was thus able to superintend his improvements, until in 1810 he was transferred to the command of the Upper Province, to be ultimately established, as we have seen, as civil administrator also, with head-quarters at York. His appointment, added to the despatch of the Forty-first to Upper Canada, produced the best results. The inhabitants, who had thought that they were going to be abandoned, came forward with eager professions of loyalty and readiness to fight, while the Indians also showed an excellent spirit. It was then, in December 1811, that Brock wrote to Prevost, urging him to permit larger concentration of regular troops at so remote a

spot as Amherstburg, in order to seize Detroit and Mackinac by surprise. The acquisition of these two posts would, as he pointed out, secure the friendship of the Indians, whose enmity to the United States would make a diversion upon the western frontier, and compel a respectable part of the American force to be distracted to that quarter. For the rest, as he correctly divined, the main onslaught of the Americans would be directed towards the straits of Niagara, all other operations being subordinate to this principal attack ; and it would therefore be necessary to bring additional regular troops to that point also, so as to hearten the militia. But unless Detroit and Mackinac were mastered at once, there was no alternative but to evacuate the whole country as far as Kingston.¹

Prevost for his part was by no means disinclined to take the offensive ; but his means were limited, and he had little hope of reinforcements from England, so that he did not feel justified in sending Brock more than three to four hundred extra regular troops. Prevost's position was a delicate one, for his predecessor had ruffled the susceptibilities of the Colonists, and though he was on the way to conciliate them, he had not yet had time to gain their confidence completely. However, the insolent speeches of the American orators had roused the pride of the Canadians ; and the Parliament of Lower Canada after some demur consented to allow two thousand men to be balloted to serve for three months in two successive years. In Upper Canada also Brock was able to carry a supplementary Militia Bill, and to secure the services of the flank-companies of the militia, which enabled him to embody and train from six to seven hundred men at once, with the expectation of thrice that number later on. The Glengarry Fencibles were likewise augmented to six hundred men, with every promise of becoming an excellent battalion ; but even so the force at disposal

¹ Brock to Prevost, 2nd Dec. 1811 ; 12th Feb. 1812. Printed in Tupper's *Life of Brock*, pp. 123 sq., 147 seq.

1812. was pitifully small, while the news of American preparations and of their tampering with the Indians became daily more ominous. To make matters worse, the latest instructions received from England gave notice that the exigencies of the service in Europe compelled the reduction of all foreign garrisons, and that two much weaker battalions would shortly arrive to take the place of the Forty-first and Forty-ninth. Above all, money was scarce ; the Government in England had warned Prevost that they could provide none ; and it was certain that the declaration of war would definitely stop all advent of specie, the only source of supply being the United States. Altogether the situation of the Governor was by no means enviable.¹

By a singular piece of neglect Mr. Foster, the British Minister at Washington, sent no intelligence of the declaration of war to Upper Canada ; and the news first reached both Brock and Prevost from private

June 24. sources on the 24th of June. At that moment Brock had under his hand a force of some seventeen hundred of all ranks,² scattered about over a line of six to seven hundred miles from Kingston to St. Joseph's. His first step was to transport two companies of the Forty-first at once from York to the frontier at Niagara, and to follow them himself in an open boat to Fort George, where he established his head-quarters. He was painfully embarrassed by the want of definite instructions from Prevost ; but on the 28th of June he despatched orders to Captain Roberts, the commandant at St. Joseph's, to do his best to capture Mackinac. As it happened, Roberts received on the same day a communication from Prevost, bidding him try his utmost to secure his post, but in case of necessity to retreat.

¹ Sec. of State to Prevost, 2nd April, 15th May 1812.

² 41st	900)	}
10th Veterans	250	
Newfoundland Fencibles	250	
Royal Artillery	50	
Provincial Seamen	50	

1500 rank and file.

Between these contradictory directions Roberts rightly chose those of Brock ; and on the 16th of July he embarked a small force of about two hundred and twenty Europeans and four hundred Indians, with two light cannon, landed before Mackinac at dawn of the 17th, and by ten o'clock had placed one of his guns upon a height commanding the fort. Thereupon the American garrison, which had been left at the ridiculous strength of sixty men, surrendered without resistance.

Meanwhile the American General Hull had on the 30th of June reached the Maumee with one regiment of regular troops and some militia, making up a total altogether of about twenty-four hundred of all ranks. Here, being still unapprised of the declaration of war, he loaded a schooner with military stores, and having placed in her also his private papers, sent her down the river to Detroit. She was promptly captured by an English vessel from Amherstburg ; and Hull's papers presently reached Brock at Fort St. George, giving him for the first time a true idea of his adversary's strength, which greatly exceeded his expectations. On the 2nd of July Hull was apprised of the declaration of war, and a few days later he arrived at Detroit, where he received discretionary orders to capture Amherstburg. Accordingly on the 12th he crossed the strait, absolutely without molestation, and occupied the village of Sandwich, where he issued a pompous proclamation, offering protection to all who wished to escape from the tyranny of British rule and threatening death to every white man taken fighting in alliance with Indians. Such good fortune as the passage of the straits without so much as the firing of a shot would have encouraged any man of energy to storm Amherstburg out of hand. The Canadian militia as a matter of fact had behaved very ill. Many of them had dispersed to their homes ; the remainder, fewer than five hundred, were utterly useless ; and in fact the only men of value in the post were three hundred of the Forty-first.¹ But Hull

¹ Prevost to Sec. of State, 30th July 1812.

1812. mistrusted himself and his troops ; and after two days' hesitation he called a council of war, which as usual resolved not to fight. Thereupon he sat still at Sandwich to await the arrival of siege-artillery.

The news of the occupation of Sandwich reached July 20. Brock on the 20th of July, and threw him into the greatest anxiety. An American force, which he reckoned at twelve hundred strong, lay in his front, and was in itself nothing very formidable ; but he thought it incredible that Hull should not have mastered Amherstburg, and he dreaded not only the general effect of such a disaster upon the inhabitants, but also the probable arrival of a thousand men of Hull's force in his rear. However, he sent Colonel Proctor, an active officer, to take command at Amherstburg, though with great misgivings lest he should arrive too late ; and despatched a small detachment of regulars and militia to check the raids of the Americans from Sandwich. For the moment everything seemed to be going wrong. Prevost, suddenly making up his mind that the Americans would not take the offensive, deprecated any aggression on Brock's part lest thereby he should unite the two political parties in the States in common hostility against Canada. A tribe of Indians, upon whose assistance Brock had counted, refused to join him ; and, since this action was a direct menace to the inhabitants, he was obliged to leave the militia of one district to guard their homes instead of calling them out into the field. The militia of Norfolk county, either through disloyalty or because they were overawed by Hull's proclamation, refused to march ; and one party of five hundred, farther to the west, actually sought the protection of the enemy. Even the select flank-companies showed impatience to return to their own place. Brock was burning to take personal command at Amherstburg, but he was detained by the necessity of meeting the legislature at York on the 27th of July. He had hoped to obtain from it drastic powers for dealing with refractory militia ; but honourable members had made up their minds that their

country would soon be in the hands of the Americans, 1812, and refused to compromise themselves. Brock therefore prorogued them after eight days' session, having obtained from them at least some supplies. He had already been obliged to establish a paper currency ; and the success of this measure together with the news of the fall of Mackinac, which reached him on the 29th, were his only consolations during this most melancholy time.¹

Prevost also had not been without his troubles. Immediately that the declaration of war became known, some of the parishes about Montreal refused to furnish their quota of militia ; and there ensued a regular riot, in the course of which a body of insurgents marched off to seize the King's boats which were lying at La Chine. A few shots from a company of the Forty-ninth soon dispersed them with a loss of one man killed and another wounded ; and this timely severity quickly brought about complete submission. Eight thousand men were presently embodied, and the arrival on the 15th of July of the Hundred and Third Regiment at Quebec helped to restore confidence not a little. But Sir George still hesitated to detach any reinforcements to Brock until the 25th, and then he sent only one hundred and fifty Fencibles and Veterans, to strengthen the garrison of Kingston and release a company of the Forty-ninth for service with Brock's handful of men. Herein Prevost showed want of energy and enterprise. It is true that the Americans were forming depots and building bateaux on Lake Champlain, but they had little appearance of strength ; and an enemy which had reached no more advanced stage than this three weeks after the commencement of hostilities, was not greatly to be dreaded. Moreover, Prevost was daily expecting another British battalion, the Royal Scots, at Quebec ; and though this corps had been sent out only in the way of a relief and not as a reinforcement, he could perfectly well take the responsibility of retaining it. His chief

¹ Tupper's *Life of Brock*, pp. 195-225.

1812. staff officer, Colonel Baynes, pressed him earnestly to despatch further troops to Brock, but in vain.¹ The truth seems to be that the General, in spite of all warnings, persisted in his belief that the internal divisions of America would avert any serious operation of the enemy ; and on the 29th of July a report reached him which tended greatly to fortify him in his opinion.

By a singular coincidence, on the very day that the United States had declared war the British Government had revoked the obnoxious Orders in Council, so far as concerned America ; and Ministers therefore hoped that, in spite of all that had passed, friendly relations might Aug. 1. be maintained. On the 1st of August Prevost received official confirmation of the news, and at once sent Colonel Baynes to treat with General Dearborn for a suspension of hostilities. Dearborn, who was at Albany, consented to confine his troops to the defensive until instructions should arrive from his Government ; but he gave no orders to Hull, whom, as he afterwards explained, he did not consider to be under his command. Indeed it was certain, from the distances to be traversed, that intelligence of the agreement could not reach either Hull or Brock for at least two or three weeks. Prevost has been greatly blamed for proposing this armistice which, as shall be seen, produced very mischievous consequences ; and yet in doing so he was unquestionably fulfilling the wishes of the British Cabinet. So far, he had received no instructions from Downing Street subsequent to the opening of hostilities ; but all despatches previous to it had impressed upon him the fact that neither men nor money could be spared for Canada from home, that every possible soldier was required for service in Europe, even to the weakening of colonial garrisons, and that all care must be taken not to irritate the United States. Indeed the British Government, as is proved by the despatches of the Secretary of State, made sure that the repeal of the Orders in Council would restore amity between the two nations ;

¹ *Life of Brock*, p. 299.

and Prevost's action in seeking to build up peace upon such a repeal was not only approved but applauded.¹ Beyond doubt also Liverpool and his colleagues were right in endeavouring to avoid an American war, for they had enemies enough upon their hands already; and Prevost, who was very far from an unintelligent man, may be said to have shown high moral courage of a kind in subordinating his own plans and desires to the yet higher interests of the Empire. Moreover, Mr. Foster, our late Minister at Washington, had impressed upon Prevost the fact that, unless the territory of the United States were invaded, the American Government could not order the militia to pass beyond its own frontier. Altogether there would have been very much to be said for the maintenance of a pacific attitude, but for two principal facts: the first, that the British Government did not realise the actual situation in America; the second, that the only possible means of defending Canada was by a brisk offensive. To sit still was simply to give the Americans time to prepare an overwhelming force; and it was idle to contend, as Prevost did, that the divisions among the Americans would be healed by British aggression and best kept open by an ostentatious inoffensive. Nothing breeds recrimination so surely as failure.

However there was no obstacle to prevent Prevost from sending money, reinforcements, and stores to Brock, which he eventually did on the 13th; and meanwhile that indefatigable officer, happily ignorant of all armistices, had collected two hundred and fifty militia and passed over with them from York to Burlington Bay, whence he marched by land to Long Point. Here he embarked his men and sixty of the Forty-first in every description of open boat that he could obtain from the settlers on the shore, and set off on the voyage of two hundred miles to Amherstburg. At the best of times such a journey would have been perilous, for the coast in

¹ Sec. of State to Prevost, 2nd April, 15th May, 1st, 10th Aug., 1st Oct. 1812.

1812. many places consists of lofty cliffs with never a creek for shelter ; and the flotilla encountered heavy rain and tempestuous weather. Once Brock's own boat ran upon a sunken rock and could not be shoved off till the General set the example of jumping overboard, when every one with him did likewise and soon set the craft afloat again. Animated by his infectious activity the little squadron was by great exertion brought to Am-

Aug. 13. herstburg shortly before midnight on the 13th, the militia having endured the extreme fatigue and hardship of the journey with a constancy and cheerfulness beyond all praise. Here he found that Proctor had not been idle, having sent out small parties to harass Hull's communications, upon the whole with considerable success and very slight loss. It was encouraging also to find that letters from Hull, most despondent in tone, had been intercepted. In fact on the 7th and 8th of August the American General had withdrawn his troops to the American side of the strait, leaving at first from two to three hundred men entrenched on the British side, but recalling them also before they could be cut off. Altogether the outlook was not unpromising for such a leader as Brock.

His first act was to assemble the Indians under their very remarkable leader Tecumseh, and tell them that he was come to ask their assistance in driving the enemy from Detroit, and to learn from them how to make war in the forest. "Hoooh . . . this is a man !" ejaculated Tecumseh as he listened ; and the plan of attack was soon agreed upon. Batteries for five guns and mortars were constructed against Fort Detroit ; and having sent to Hull a summons, which was defied,

Aug. 15. on the evening of the 15th, Brock despatched six hundred Indians under a British officer across the strait in the night, with orders to take up a position to cover the landing of the troops in the morning. At six

Aug. 16. o'clock on the 16th the batteries opened fire, and three hundred and thirty regular troops,¹ with five light

¹ R.A., 30 ; 41st, 250 ; Newfoundland Rgt. 50.

guns and four hundred militia crossed the water and 1812. disembarked without molestation from four to five miles Aug. 16. below and west of Detroit. By all accounts Hull's force numbered at least two thousand men; and Brock's intention had consequently been to take up a strong position close to the fort, so as to compel the enemy to come out and fight him; but upon landing he heard that Hull had detached a party of five hundred men under Colonel M'Arthur three days before, and that these were on the point of returning. He decided therefore to attack at once, and moved forward upon Detroit, having his right covered by the armed vessel *Queen Charlotte* and his left by the Indians, who moved through the skirts of the forest. As he advanced, the Americans abandoned a commanding eminence, which they had strengthened by palisades and by two heavy guns, and retired into the fort; and, before Brock could form his columns of assault, a white flag came out to suggest a capitulation. It was very soon agreed that Detroit should be surrendered and that the entire American force, including M'Arthur's detachment, should become prisoners; and at noon Brock marched into the fort at the head of his troops. A brig of war, thirty-three pieces of ordnance, and a considerable quantity of munitions fell into the hands of the British; and Brock reckoned the number of the captured at not fewer than two thousand five hundred men.

It is difficult to account for this extraordinary behaviour on the part of Hull. His troops, it is true, were bad and undisciplined, and the fort was encumbered by a number of quivering refugees who had been considerably agitated by the cannonade from the other side of the strait; but he had nearly a month's supplies with plenty of ammunition; and reinforcements to the number of nearly five thousand men were within a few days' march of him. More remarkable still, on his arrival at Montreal he showed no sense of shame or humiliation, being content to rail upon the Government

1812. at Washington and lay all responsibility for the disaster Aug. to their charge. Indeed he was not above uttering the falsehood that he had not one day's powder left at Detroit, and evinced no embarrassment when confronted with the return of the ample store surrendered with the fort.¹ Thinking that his murmurings might be useful in heightening the discontent of the Americans with their Government, Prevost allowed him to go on parole to Boston, where no doubt his story gained for him some credit with political partisans, but can hardly have won sympathy from honest men. Two years later he was tried by a court-martial, which very properly found him guilty of cowardice and condemned him to death, though the sentence was remitted in consideration of his services in the War of Independence. It may be urged that the idea of sending an expedition against Amherstburg at all was wrong, since the place must have fallen of itself upon the capture of the British posts at Niagara or at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, and that in any case such an enterprise, without naval superiority first secured on Lake Erie, was absurd. The rulers of America in their ineffable conceit ignored all military considerations, thinking that their armed rabble had only to walk over the Canadian border and seize what it pleased; and no terms of contempt and condemnation can be too strong for them. But a military commander has a duty to his country as well as to his Government. It is his business to endeavour to make good the mistakes of his masters, not to aggravate their blunders by his own misconduct, and then to take the lead in reviling those that are set in authority over him. In fact Hull's conduct was infamous, and he was very lucky to escape hanging.

However, the immediate effect of this affair naturally was to depress the Americans profoundly, while inspiring the Canadian militia with confidence, overawing the disaffected and heartening the loyal throughout the length

¹ For Hull's bearing at Montreal see Tupper's *Life of Brock*, p. 305.

and breadth of the country. Brock, fully realising this, 1812. flew back to Niagara as soon as he had arranged affairs at Detroit, but was met on the 23rd of August, while Aug. 23. sailing across Lake Erie, with the news of the armistice concluded by Prevost with Dearborn. The tidings filled him with mortification and dismay, for he had laid all his plans for attacking the American naval arsenal at Sackett's Harbour, and there can be little doubt that he would have succeeded; in which case the enemy's task of overthrowing the British naval superiority on Lake Ontario would have been rendered infinitely more difficult. Moreover it naturally enraged him to see that naval superiority made worthless by the armistice, and supplies and stores, of which the enemy was greatly in need, travelling comfortably by water to Niagara to strengthen the force which he would ultimately have to combat. However he was fain to return to Fort George and await events. On the 30th of Aug. 30. August an aide-de-camp arrived at Montreal with a letter from Dearborn reporting that the Government at Washington declined to suspend hostilities, though adding an expression of his own ardent wish that an honourable and permanent peace might shortly be concluded. Prevost's letter carrying the intelligence to Brock reached that officer on the 4th of September Sept. 4. at Kingston, to which he was paying a flying visit, and decided him to return to Fort George immediately.

He found the enemy's numbers at Niagara so greatly increased and their demeanour so menacing that he applied to Sir George on the 7th for further reinforce- Sept. 7. ments; and it was at this period that the relations between the two officers began to grow strained. Prevost, notwithstanding the expiration of the armistice, had given positive orders to Brock to stand on the defensive; and, on receiving the latter's request for additional troops, he answered very curtly that, unless the attitude of the Americans at Niagara became less threatening, Detroit must be evacuated and the garrison at Amherstburg reduced. Brock meanwhile, upon

1812. intelligence that the Americans were again advancing upon Amherstburg, had actually determined not only not to reduce the garrison but even to reinforce it ; and he declined, under Prevost's discretionary instructions, to evacuate Detroit. The effect of such a measure, he said, would be that the Indians would either exterminate the population on the American side of the strait, or make terms with the enemy against the British. The policies of the two men were in fact radically opposed to each other. Prevost not only believed in the inoffensive as the path to peace, but at heart was evidently for abandoning everything west of Niagara, if not indeed Kingston. According to the ordinary rules of war he was upon the latter point undoubtedly right ; for the effort to hold too many posts may mean the loss of all. Brock, on the other hand, recognised the Americans for what they were, a vindictive, but unmilitary and unready nation, with whom at the outset every kind of liberty could be taken, and whose folly should be turned to the utmost advantage before adversity should convert it into wisdom.¹

Unfortunately the American Government had in one respect found wisdom early, for on the 3rd of September they had ordered Captain Isaac Chauncey, at that time employed in the navy-yard at New York, to take the naval command on Lakes Erie and Ontario and "use every exertion to obtain control of them this fall." On the latter lake there was already the *Oneida*, a brig of eighteen guns, manned by officers and men of the United States navy. Upon Erie there was no naval force of any kind ; wherefore Chauncey almost immediately despatched Lieutenant Elliott to select a site for a naval yard and to contract for the construction of two vessels of three hundred tons apiece. Meanwhile he toiled with extraordinary energy to send forward every-

¹ For the correspondence between Brock and Prevost see Tupper's *Life of Brock*, pp. 309-321. One letter of Brock, dated 7th Sept., is missing ; but its purport is given in Prevost to Sec. of State, 12th Sept. 1812.

thing that was requisite for a naval station, including 1812. over one hundred guns with their ammunition, one hundred and forty ship's carpenters, and seven hundred seamen and marines. Nothing was ready excepting the guns ; every carriage required to be constructed and every shot to be cast ; so hopelessly ignorant were the rulers of the United States of the meaning of war. All this mass of material was sent by water to Albany ; and on the 26th of September Chauncey himself started up Sept. 26. the Hudson in a steamer, and made his way thence by land to Sackett's Harbour. So bad were the roads that he was obliged to order all stores to be sent by way of Lake Oneida to Oswego, notwithstanding the many breaks in the water-way and the danger from English ships in the passage from Oswego to Sackett's Harbour. Elliott, who had reached Buffalo on the 14th of September, reported that in that quarter also there were long stretches of road so infamous that no ordnance could be taken over them until deep snow should permit the use of sledges. In fact it was hopeless to think of making any naval effort upon Lake Erie until the following year, and Chauncey had no choice but to resign himself to the inevitable.

Happy chance, however, gave him the advantage for which he had not dared to hope. On the 8th of Oct. 8. October there anchored before Port Erie the *Caledonia*, which so far had given the British supremacy on the lake, and the *Detroit*, which had been surrendered by Hull under the capitulation. Both were commanded and manned, as indeed were all the British vessels, by Canadians, who, through no fault of their own, were very far from efficient. It was, as Prevost complained, one of his principal difficulties to find suitable officers and crews for his ships. Sailors were scraped together wherever they could be found, and were eked out with Newfoundland Fencibles, as most likely to be familiar with the sea ; but the officers to train these men were wanting, the colonial commanders having neither experience nor energy. By chance the first detachment

1812. of ninety seamen from New York was within call of Buffalo, and Elliott sent orders to hurry them forward. At noon of the 8th they arrived ; and at one o'clock Oct. 9. on the following morning Elliott embarked with one hundred sailors and soldiers, who, after two hours hard pulling against the stream, came alongside the two vessels by surprise, and mastered them without difficulty. The *Detroit* and *Caledonia* carried sixty-eight men only, and were encumbered by forty American prisoners from Amherstburg ; but even so their capture was very disgraceful. Elliott succeeded in carrying off the *Caledonia*, but the British batteries compelled him to run the *Detroit* aground on the American shore and abandon her. The British then boarded her, but being unable to warp her off from want of an anchor, and being also not a little galled by the American musketry, in their turn deserted her ; whereupon the Americans put an end to the matter by setting her on fire. Elliott's blow, boldly and skilfully aimed, had struck home indeed.

Brock was deeply chagrined. "This event," he wrote to Prevost, "may reduce us to incalculable distress. The enemy is making every exertion to gain a naval superiority upon both lakes, which if they accomplish I do not see how we can retain the country. More vessels are fitting out for war on the other side of Squaw Island (the naval station selected by Elliott) which I should have attempted to destroy but for Your Excellency's repeated instructions to forbear. Now such a force is collected for their protection as will render every operation against them very hazardous."¹ This tacit reproach to Prevost for tying his hands may be excused, as the mischief was irreparable. The loss of the cargo alone was serious, for it included four cannon and two hundred muskets, which were none too plentiful ; but the loss of the ship was beyond estimation. Brock had intended to despatch reinforcements and supplies to Amherstburg, but he was now

¹ Brock to Prevost, 11th Oct. 1812. Tupper, p. 324.

compelled to send the men only in his one remaining ship, the *Lady Prevost*, and to direct her to return as soon as possible for the victuals. He declined, however, to subject Proctor to the restrictions imposed upon himself, and his last orders to him were "to keep the enemy in a state of constant ferment" by every description of harassing attack.

Meanwhile the American army on the other side of the strait had grown until it had reached a total of some eight thousand men. Rather over fourteen hundred regular troops were stationed on the extreme right at Fort Niagara and at Four Mile Creek, about three miles in rear of it ; and at Lewiston, six miles to the south, were rather more than three thousand men, over two-thirds of them New York militia and the remainder regular infantry. The whole of these were under the command of Major-general Rensselaer, but he, being only a militiaman, wisely trusted for counsel to his Adjutant-general, who was also his cousin bearing the same name, and a Colonel in the Regular Army. South of the falls about Buffalo were over sixteen hundred regulars, four hundred militia, and two hundred and fifty sailors under Brigadier Smyth, a professional officer, nominally under Van Rensselaer's command, but highly disinclined to work with him. To oppose this force Brock had six companies of the Forty-ninth, four or five of the Forty-first and a handful of artillery, perhaps eight hundred regular troops altogether, besides some four hundred militia and two to three hundred Indians ; the whole being necessarily dispersed along the front of thirty-six miles from his head-quarters at Fort George to Fort Erie. At Fort George itself were stationed the detachment of the Forty-first, some four hundred strong, about one hundred militia and two to three score Indians. At Vrooman's or Scott's Point, about a mile to south, was a twenty-four-pounder gun, mounted *en barbette* to command the river, under the charge of a detachment of militia ; and two miles above it at Brown's Point were two more companies of

1812. militia. Three miles to south of Brown's Point stood Oct. the village of Queenston, consisting then of about twenty houses with gardens and orchards, of a barrack, and of a large stone building. At this point the ground rises abruptly to a height of three hundred and fifty feet above the water ; and immediately above Queenston the banks of the river become cliffs. About half-way up this ascent was mounted an eighteen-pounder, the care of which, together with that of the village on the bank of the river, was committed to the flank companies of the Forty-ninth and a company of militia. The remainder of the British force was at Chippewa and Fort Erie ; but Brock had concentrated his principal strength at the northern end of the strait, suspecting that the large detachment of the enemy at Four Mile Creek portended an attempt upon Fort George.

For some time past the American militiamen at Lewiston had amused themselves by firing across the river—just at that point little more than two hundred yards broad—at all passers-by and at the windows of the houses. Roused by the bold exploit of Elliott these heroes informed their chief that he must lead them to the attack, otherwise they would go home, a proceeding thoroughly characteristic of amateur soldiers of all nations, who imagine that war is a matter of fighting and, if possible, of pillage, rather than of self-denial and endurance. Rensselaer laid his plans to surprise

Oct. 11. the British at daybreak of the 11th; but, the gentleman in charge of the flotilla having disappeared very early in the proceedings, the attempt was abandoned. Unfortunately for the American General a British officer with a flag of truce landed on the same evening on the eastern shore, observed the number of boats concealed among the rocks, and drew his own conclusions. Ignorant of this fact, Rensselaer decided to

Oct. 13. repeat his attack on the 13th. A battery of four heavy pieces and two field-guns had been established above Lewiston to protect the passage and to play upon the British post at Queenston ; and it was arranged that

three hundred regulars and as many militia should be 1812.
the first to cross the river under the fire of these Oct. 13.
cannon. Fourteen boats only were to hand, two of
which would carry eighty men apiece, and the remainder
thirty only ; but it was hoped that the advanced party
would suffice to obtain a footing on the Canadian
shore, after which the craft would return and bring
reinforcements to the number, if necessary, of over
three thousand men.

The night was pitch dark and slight rain was falling
when the boats shoved off. Three, including the two
largest, were carried down stream by the current, very
rapid at that short distance below the falls, and the
smallest of the three alone landed its freight some way
below Queenston, the two others reverting to their
starting-point. Ten only reached the landing-place at
Queenston safely ; the troops disembarked and formed ;
and the boats put back at once to bring over more men.
But meanwhile the guard which held Queenston, con-
sisting of about one hundred men of the Forty-ninth
and some militia under Captain Dennis, had turned out
and saluted the invaders with a destructive volley, which
sent them flying behind the rocks for cover. Colonel
van Rensselaer, who was in command, was wounded in
four places, and the casualties are said to have numbered
over fifty, which is probably no exaggeration, for the
range was short and the British fired low.¹ The boats
were slow in returning, and, as they came, two of them
were again carried down-stream, the one below Queenston
and the other to Vrooman's battery where both parties
were taken prisoners. At the same time the American
cannon opened a vague fire in the dark, which roused
Brock from his sleep at Fort George. The remainder
of the two companies under Dennis's command quietly
joined their leader at the sound of the cannonade ;
and the rest of the garrison of Queenston under Captain
Williams took post at the battery higher up the hill.

Soon afterwards Brock came galloping up, alone and

¹ Van Rensselaer's wounds were all below the waist.

1812. unattended, as fast as his horse could carry him. On Oct. 13. his way he was met by a subaltern of the detachment of militia at Brown's Point, who, hastening to his side, received his orders to summon the reserve from Fort George, and to send out a party of Indians to cover their right flank as they advanced. Turning up the hill short of Queenston, Brock made straight for the eighteen-pounder battery, where observing that the Americans, who had been reinforced, were beginning to press upon Dennis, he sent Williams down to join him, reserving only twelve men for the protection of the gun. Suddenly this small detachment was startled by a volley of musketry on its left flank. Colonel van Rensselaer, in spite of his wounds, had instructed his second in command, Captain Wool, to move along the shore northward where there was a fisherman's path leading up the heights which, for some reason, had been left unguarded. By this path Wool ascended the hill with an advanced party of sixty men, coming with such suddenness upon Brock's little band that the General could not attempt even to remount, but was fain to rush down to the foot of the hill. Here he recalled Williams's detachment and led it up the hill to retake the battery; the militia from Brown's Point being now near at hand to support him. The ascent was covered with patches of scrub from which the American riflemen poured in a very deadly fire; and Wool had by this time been reinforced to a strength of some five hundred men. None the less Brock drove back the first detachment of one hundred and fifty troops; and, although Wool strengthened his fighting line, the British continued to gain ground until the Americans were forced to the edge of the cliffs. Here some of the enemy hoisted the white flag; but Wool tore it down; and at this critical moment Brock was struck by a bullet in the right breast, and in a few minutes was dead. His last words were "Push on the York Volunteers"—meaning thereby the detachment at Brown's Point, which now came up under the

command of the Attorney General, a most gallant ^{1812.} gentleman by name John Macdonell. Rallying the Oct. 13. few men left of Williams's company, for Williams himself had also been disabled, Macdonell led his little band again to the charge. He had apparently just recovered the battery when he was shot dead, whereupon the whole of his party gave way and dispersed. Dennis, who had maintained a stubborn fight from house to house until at last driven from the village by the American heavy guns, saw the hopelessness of attempting to regain the heights against superior numbers. He therefore fell back towards Queenston, leaving Brock's body covered with a blanket in the village.

It was now ten o'clock. The Americans had gained their object, though with difficulty, thanks chiefly to the bravery of Colonel van Rensselaer and the stubborn courage of Wool who, albeit himself wounded, had by great exertions contrived to make his men stand. They had now nearly a thousand men on the Canadian shore, and General van Rensselaer crossed over to join them with his chief engineer, in order to lay out an entrenched camp ; sending orders at the same time for additional reinforcements to come to him immediately. Brigadier Smyth, however, declined to send any of his troops ; and the American militiamen, who a few hours before had been so clamorous for the offensive, now stood upon their constitutional rights and refused to move out of their own territory. They had seen a boat sunk by a shot from the British cannonade at Vrooman's point, and had not relished the spectacle. The General recrossed the water to exhort them to come on, but in vain. Some hours passed, and at two o'clock the reserve from Fort George under Colonel Sheaffe of the Forty-ninth came upon the scene. Guided by Brock's orders to cover his right flank with a body of Indians, Sheaffe struck westward just before reaching Queenston, leaving a small party of infantry and two guns under Captain Holcroft of the Artillery close to the village,

1812, in order to menace the passage of the river. He then Oct. 13, fetched a wide compass through the forest, ascended the heights about a mile and a half from the river and came down upon the rear of the Americans with his front nearly parallel to the water. His force, by the junction of Dennis's detachment and of another small reinforcement from Chippewa, amounted by this time to nearly one thousand white troops, fully half of them regulars, besides over two hundred Indians ; and he had with him two light guns. The Americans on the Canadian bank were nearly as numerous, but appear to have been scattered, so that the force actually opposed to Sheaffe was greatly inferior to his own in numbers, and had but one gun. These faced about to receive the attack ; but they were caught in a trap, and they knew it. Their only line of retreat lay down the very steep hill northward to Queenston, in which case they would be exposed to the fire of Holcroft's guns and to the rush of the British and Indians upon their flank ; and all other access to the river was barred for fully six miles by cliffs. Sheaffe came down upon them at once, apparently edging them steadily to southward, so as to coop them up beyond hope of salvation, while Holcroft's guns effectually prevented any attempt of American troops to pass the river. A volley or two and a charge with the bayonet sufficed to decide the issue. The Americans fled in panic, many of them jumping over the cliffs in their terror ; and presently the whole of them surrendered. When the full tale of prisoners was made up, it was found to amount to nine hundred and twenty-five, while the number of killed, wounded and drowned was reckoned at three hundred more. The British casualties did not exceed ninety-four killed, wounded and missing, of whom forty-seven belonged to the flank companies of the Forty-ninth ; but the disparity of loss was a sorry compensation for the death of Brock.¹

¹ For this account of the action of Queenston I have relied upon the accounts in Tupper's *Life of Brock*, Richardson's *War of 1812*,

Now was the time for Sheaffe to push his advantage. 1812.
Most of the captured Americans were regular troops; Oct. 13.
few except dismayed militiamen remained on the opposite shore; the chief adviser of the enemy's General was disabled; and all was panic and confusion. Fort Niagara was the one permanent fortress built of masonry on the border of Upper Canada, and in the course of the day its guns had plied Fort George with red-hot shot with considerable effect. There can be little doubt that it would have surrendered if threatened immediately; and its destruction, at any rate in Prevost's opinion, would not only have removed a cause of permanent anxiety and disquietude, but would have secured the Niagara River to the British until the close of the war. Van Rensselaer, however, proposed an armistice for three days, which was weakly accepted by Sheaffe, and upon the expiry of that period was prolonged for an indefinite time, being made terminable upon thirty hours' notice from either side. This concession simply enabled the Americans to bring forward their reinforcements at their leisure, according to the false system vaguely inculcated from Downing Street, too readily adopted by Prevost, and too slavishly imitated by Sheaffe. General van Rensselaer presently resigned, making way for his former subordinate Smyth, who inaugurated his assumption of command by a proclamation reflecting upon the appointment of "popular men," such as Hull and his predecessor, to the leadership of armies. To prove himself better than they, he allowed the truce to continue until he had assembled over four thousand men about Black Rock, and had built and procured boats sufficient to carry thirty-five hundred men across the river; and then on the 19th Nov. 19. of November he denounced the armistice. He did not, however, move until the 28th, when in the first hours Nov. 28. of the morning he sent about four hundred men across the river in two parties, the one to master a small

1812. British post about two miles from Fort Erie, the other Nov. 28. to break down the bridge over Frenchmen's creek, and so to sever the communication between Fort Erie and the post at Chippewa. The details of what ensued are obscure. All that is certain is that British and American parties wandered up and down the bank in the darkness, sometimes firing at each other, sometimes mistaking each other for friends ; that the Americans for a time were masters of one British post and of three or four British guns, but that they were dispossessed by a superior force at daylight, when such of them as had not already recrossed the river were captured. The casualties on each side were about fifty killed and wounded and thirty to forty prisoners ; but the results of the enterprise were absolutely nugatory.

Having announced that his men "would conquer or die," Smyth professed himself undaunted by this mishap. His next step was to parade his whole force on his own side of the river, and in view of its formidable appearance to invite the British commandant at Fort Erie to surrender, in order to "spare the effusion of blood." This offer being declined, the General formed the valorous resolution of crossing the river on the

Nov. 30. morning of the 30th, but then discovered that his officers also held strong opinions respecting the shedding of blood in general and of their own blood in particular, and were unwilling to expose the flotilla to the fire of the British batteries in broad daylight. Thereupon Smyth deferred the operation until the dark hours of the

Dec. 1. following morning ; but, when daylight broke, only fifteen hundred men had been embarked, the rest being still on the shore and firmly resolved not to leave it. Smyth therefore counter-ordered the movement, and announced that he would make no further attempt to invade Canada until reinforced, or, in other words, that he would undertake nothing further during the current season. Upon this his army broke into tumultuous demonstrations of delight, saluting the glad tidings with a wild and prolonged discharge of muskets ; and

so ended the campaign of 1812 at the frontier of 1812. Niagara. But for the death of Brock its conclusion would have been very different ; and but for the thwarting of Brock's plans by Prevost the entire situation would have been transformed.

On the frontier of Lake Champlain the feebleness of Dearborn was almost as great as that of Smyth. He did not advance to Champlain until November, and even then accomplished no more than the surprise of a small post of militia ; whereupon Prevost retaliated by the capture of an American block-house and its garrison. On the 22nd of November Dearborn put his men into winter quarters at Albany, Plattsburg, and Burlington, having made as inglorious a campaign as ever general did. Nor were the American attempts in the extreme west more fortunate. General Harrison, who had succeeded Hull, had advanced upon Detroit with some ten thousand men, whom, owing to the difficulties of transport and supply, he had divided into three columns. Of these the left-hand column of fifteen hundred men under General Winchester reached Fort Defiance at the junction of the Auglaize and Maumee rivers towards the end of October ; the centre column, which should have followed in the track taken by Hull, failed altogether to attain its appointed station ; and the right-hand column under Harrison himself occupied Upper Sandusky towards the end of December ; the united strength of the two columns being over six thousand men. Impatient to strike a blow, Harrison ordered Winchester to descend the Maumee as far as the Rapids, ten or twelve miles from Lake Erie, and there prepare sleds for a swift advance upon Amherstburg and Detroit as soon as the lake should be frozen over. Winchester arrived at the Rapids on the 10th Jan. 10. of January 1813, where he presently received a message from a small settlement of French Canadians at Frenchtown, about thirty miles to north-east, begging him to drive away a party of three hundred militia and Indians which had occupied the village. He therefore detached

1813. a force of nearly seven hundred men under Colonel Lewis, who, after a severe march, great part of it on the ice of the Maumee, came upon Frenchtown on the Jan. 18. afternoon of the 18th, and after a sharp action drove back the British party some sixteen miles to Brownstown. The retreat was most gallantly covered by the Indians, whose stubbornness cost the Americans sixty-seven killed and wounded, with slight loss to themselves.

On learning of this success Winchester proceeded at once with two hundred and fifty men to reinforce Lewis, while Harrison hastened with every man that he could spare to the rapids of the Maumee. Proctor at Jan. 19. Amherstburg, being apprised early on the 19th of what had passed, likewise directed all the troops at his disposal to assemble at Brownstown. Advancing from thence with about five hundred whites, eight hundred Indians,¹ and three light guns, he moved southward across the ice, and on the evening of the Jan. 21. 21st bivouacked within five miles of the enemy's camp. Resuming his march two hours before dawn, he came before daybreak in sight of their position. Not a single outpost had been thrown out; the Americans were all asleep; and the British line was half formed within musket-shot of them before their sentries had remarked anything unusual. A rapid onset would have ended matters there and then with the bayonet. Instead of this Proctor halted, unlimbered his guns, and proceeded to wake up the whole of the enemy by a cannonade. There was in front of the village a stout palisade, behind which the American marksmen took shelter and opened a most destructive fire. In spite of all efforts no impression could be made upon the enemy at this point, though the American right, which was on the

¹ Prevost gives Proctor's force as 3 cos. of the 41st, a detachment of the Newfoundland Fencibles, the sailors of the ship *Queen Charlotte*; 150 of the Essex Militia; in all not above 500 r. and f. (to Sec. of State, 8th Feb. 1813). Allowing for men left to hold the fort, we may take the number present in the action at 500 of all ranks.

open ground, was swept away by the militia and 1813. Indians in utter rout. After an hour's fighting Jan. 22. Proctor, taking advantage of this success, turned the right of the palisade and drove the remnant of the enemy into some blockhouses, which they had constructed since their arrival. Here, however, they still maintained an obstinate defence until General Winchester, who had been captured among the fugitives of the American right, sent them an order to surrender. Some six hundred prisoners were taken, and it was reckoned that fully three hundred men of the American force perished by bullet or tomahawk. In a word, the success was complete, and Winchester's column was almost annihilated.¹

But Proctor's losses were also very heavy, amounting to twenty-four white men killed and one hundred and fifty-eight, including officers, wounded. The three companies of the Forty-first alone counted one hundred and twelve casualties, which cannot have been much less than half of their entire number. It seems to be beyond question that most of these lives were unnecessarily sacrificed owing to the tactical blunders of Proctor. His instant resolution to take the offensive, the rapidity of his movements, and his final approach to the American position before dawn are deserving of all praise; but his failure to turn his advantages to account, and his mishandling of the troops in action, stamp him for what he was, a bad commander.

However, the success at Frenchtown made a brilliant close to the campaign of 1812. The Americans had frittered away their strength at the straits of Detroit and Niagara, and had not only accomplished nothing, but had been well beaten and humiliated. On Lake Champlain, where their real effort should have been made with all possible strength and resolution, they had failed even to attempt active operations. In plain words, their plan of campaign had been futile, and its

¹ I have relied for this action chiefly on the narrative of Richardson (*War of 1812*), who was present.

1813. execution feeble beyond contempt ; and the result was increased embitterment of feeling between the two parties in America which had advocated or opposed the war. The internal divisions of the nation were further widened by the judicious conduct of the British Government, which at the outbreak of hostilities gave to all American shipping in British harbours free departure and safe protection on their voyage home, provided that they took cargoes of British goods. Under the Act prohibiting the importation of British merchandise these cargoes were liable to confiscation ; but the American Government had not strength to enforce this law ; and after an acrimonious debate in Congress the whole of the forfeitures were remitted. The British Government also gave licences to all American vessels which would carry corn to the British Army in Spain ; whereby the northern provinces, which detested the war and owned nearly the whole of the American shipping, reaped considerable profit at the expense of their southern neighbours. Prevost, in spite of all difficulties, was able to purchase and send to Wellington at a moderate price nearly four thousand barrels of flour. But on the other hand the outlook for 1813 was far from cheerful. Captain Chauncey was working indefatigably to secure for the Americans naval superiority upon Lake Ontario, and before the end of November had launched a ship of six hundred tons within nine weeks of the day when the timber for her construction had been felled. So industrious and energetic a man was a dangerous foe at the best of times ; the more so since, though the American Army—or what passed for such—had covered itself with disgrace, the American Navy had gained considerable credit. Four several British frigates, which had foolishly engaged American vessels of superior strength in single action, were shattered to pieces and taken with small loss to their adversaries, whose ships were not only well built and well manned, but bravely fought and skilfully manoeuvred. These victories were sufficient to hearten

the Americans to further efforts, and to outweigh 1813. any effect that might have been produced by Prevost's fatal policy of conciliation. Wellington, far away in Portugal and with imperfect information, passed his usual shrewd comment upon the event. "I have been very uneasy about the American naval successes. I think we should have peace with America before the season for opening the campaign in Canada if we could take one or two of their d—d frigates."¹

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Beresford, 6th Feb. 1813.

CHAPTER XVII

1812. ON the 24th of July Clausel brought his shattered
July 24. troops into Arevalo ; and on the same day Joseph, who had marched from Madrid with fourteen thousand men on the 21st, fixed his headquarters at Blasco Sancho, between ten and fifteen miles to south and west of him, being still ignorant not only of the battle of Salamanca but even of the position of the Army of Portugal. On July 25. the 25th he received letters both from Marmont and Clausel, which revealed something of the truth. For the present, Clausel insisted, it was everything to him to reach Valladolid before the British, so as to evacuate the place of its hospitals and stores, and re-establish communication with the Army of the North ; but if the English should march upon Madrid, he undertook to remain upon the Douro. Meanwhile he added the dispiriting remark that by the time that Joseph had assembled the Armies of Aragon and of the South, he hoped to have twenty thousand men fit for service. Learning from the bearers of these letters that Clausel had already resumed his retreat northward upon Olmedo, Joseph made a rapid march to Espenar at the foot of the Guadarrama, so as to regain Madrid ; but, on the representation of both Clausel and Marmont that the British pursuit had slackened, and that they were anxious for the junction of his force with theirs, he turned north-
July 27. ward to Segovia, which he entered on the 27th. He gave the two commanders, however, to understand that he would go no further, and that if they wished for his help they must join him at Segovia, since he had no intention

of abandoning the capital. On the 29th he sent positive orders to Soult to evacuate Andalusia and move the whole of his force with all speed to Toledo ; and on the 1st of August, having heard that the Army of Portugal had passed the Douro, he quitted Segovia, regaining Madrid on the 5th. Clausel, meanwhile, pursued his way from Olmedo to Valladolid, crossed the Douro, and ascending the Pisuerga, halted between Torquemada and Palencia, from whence he sent away Aug. 5. his wounded and heavy waggons to Burgos under escort of one division, and pushed Foy's south-eastward to observe Aranda de Duero. "I have been obliged to look for a position where I can restore the *moral* of the Army . . ." he wrote to Clarke. "It is usual to see armies discouraged after a reverse, but it is difficult to find one in which the discouragement is greater than in this ; and I must not conceal from you that there reigns and has reigned for some time past a very bad spirit in this army ; our steps in this retreat have been marked everywhere by the most revolting disorders and excesses."¹

It is hardly surprising in these circumstances that Wellington's halt on the 25th was criticised by one of his officers as "unlike a quick advance following up a great victory."² A principal reason for the abandonment of the pursuit appears to have been the lagging of the supplies, which had been ordered back to Ciudad Rodrigo before the action of Salamanca, and were consequently far in rear. The recent scenes at Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo were evidently fresh in the Commander-in-Chief's mind, and he mistrusted the discipline of his troops unless he could deliver to them their rations punctually. Moreover, Cotton was disabled, and there was no other officer whom he could trust to lead his cavalry. It is humiliating to our national pride to confess the fact, but a fact it seems to be, that many a good opportunity in the Peninsula was thrown away because the

¹ Ducasse, ix. pp. 53-64; *Mémoires de Jourdan*, 420-421.

² Tomkinson, p. 191.

1812. higher commands were too often filled by incompetent men, and the rank and file, to use the General's own words, could bear neither failure nor success. However that

July 26. may be, Wellington resumed the pursuit on the 26th, having learned, through the capture of a small party of Joseph's cavalry near Arevalo on the previous day, that the King had advanced to Blasco Sancho and retired towards the passes of the Guadarrama. That he should desert Clausel puzzled Wellington somewhat; but he continued to follow the beaten army, the German Hussars who led the way reaching Almenara on the 26th, and sighting the enemy's rearguard on the 29th at Aldea Mayor. The entire force of the Allies was now closing up in anticipation of resistance at the line of the Douro; but, as we have seen, Clausel's troops were in no condition

July 30. for fighting, and on the 30th Wellington, amid loud acclamations from the people, entered Valladolid. Being still uncertain as to the movements of Joseph, he marched on the 31st south-eastward upon Cuellar, where

Aug. 1. on the 1st of August he fixed his head-quarters; but hearing definitely on the 4th of the King's retirement to Madrid, he was free to make his decision concerning his future operations.¹

The state of affairs was briefly this. The armies of Clausel and Joseph were now separated, the former having fallen back to the vicinity of Burgos and the latter to Madrid. Furthermore, owing to the direction taken by Clausel in his retreat, the French posts at Zamora, Toro, Benavente, and Tordesillas were left isolated; and accordingly one of Wellington's first measures upon reaching Valladolid was to summon the Count of Amarante's Portuguese to beleaguer Zamora, while bidding the Spanish General Santocildes to look to Tordesillas and cover the blockade of all these places. The British Army, albeit in high spirits after its victory, was sickly; and many soldiers from the five battalions that had joined it since the opening of the campaign were

¹ *Wellington Desp.*, to Douglas and Hill, 26th July; to Bathurst, 28th July; to Sir H. Popham, 4th Aug. 1812.

already in hospital, their commanding officers, in spite 1812. of strict orders, having brought them up from Lisbon without any blankets.¹ On the other hand, the financial prospect, which Wellington on the 28th of July had summed up in the single word bankruptcy, was somewhat brighter, remittances of specie having lately arrived from England. Moreover, the demoralisation of Clausel's army was a matter of common knowledge, and Wellington had expressed his conviction that the French infantry would not stand against his own. In spite of the rapidity of his retreat Clausel had been unable to complete the evacuation of Valladolid ; and seventeen guns, besides a large quantity of stores and eight hundred sick men in hospital, had been taken in the city. The guerilla-bands were showing renewed activity in every direction, and one of them under the leader Marquiñez had captured three hundred French prisoners on the 30th outside Valladolid. Without rest and peace the Army of Portugal could not recover itself ; and it was certain that, if pressed, Clausel would not wait at Burgos, but would be compelled to fall back behind the Ebro. It was open to Wellington to establish himself astride of the principal line of the enemy's communications at Burgos and lay siege to the fortress, which being of no great strength and unprepared for such a trial, would probably be taken without any great difficulty. The objection to this course was that Joseph might move up from Madrid against the British rear and communications with some eighteen thousand men, a force too great to be resisted by the Spaniards, even in combination with such small detachments as Wellington would be able to spare for their assistance. The alternative measure, namely, to march upon Madrid, was open to precisely the same danger as the first—an advance of Clausel upon the rear and communications of the Allies. It was therefore necessary to choose

¹ 2/4th, 1/5th, 38th, 1/42nd, 82nd. *Wellington Desp.* To Bathurst, 4th Aug. 1812.

1812, between Madrid and Burgos as the more desirable Aug. acquisition ; and the choice could only be determined by a review of the military situation in the Peninsula at large.

The Army of the North under Caffarelli had, as we have seen, been so much distraught by the operations of the guerillas inland and of Sir Home Popham from the sea, that no troops could be spared from it to reinforce Marmont. Caffarelli complained that he had but six thousand men at his disposal, and that the bands opposed to him numbered four times as many. The Army of the South, the most important in the Peninsula, was, as we have also seen, fully occupied with the siege of Cadiz, the repression of the guerillas and of Ballesteros, and the observation of Hill. Wellington's most recent news of Ballesteros represented his position to be dangerous ; but it was always possible to make a diversion in his favour by stirring up the garrison of Cadiz to activity. There remained the Armies of Aragon and of Valencia ; for the Corps of the Ebro, which Napoleon had organised upon paper, had soon been broken up to reinforce the Army of the North. Joseph had long been clamouring for one of Suchet's divisions, and had actually received one of his regiments, though the Duke of Albufera was distracted by the activity of the Spanish bands in all quarters, and by the menace of a descent of the British upon the coast. Suchet was obliged to go north to Reus to concert operations with Decaen on the 10th of July ; and on the 16th the explosion of the magazine at Lerida, at a moment when a considerable force of Spaniards under Eroles was before the fortress, gave him additional anxiety. He returned to Valencia to find some of the relics of Blake's army within a day's march of the city ; and on the 21st of July the sails of a British armament were seen off the coast near the mouth of the Xucar, so close to the shore that the forts actually opened fire. To account for its appearance we must glance for a brief moment at Sicily.

Lord William Bentinck, it will be remembered, had

divided all his energy in the spring of 1812 between 1812. plans for remodelling the government of Sicily and for accomplishing the liberation of Italy, the success of the latter object depending mainly upon the achievement of the former. His progress in the work of constitutional reform was, owing chiefly to his extreme gullibility, remarkably slow ; the King, Queen, and Hereditary Prince of Naples contriving each of them to shuffle off their responsibility upon the other and so to delay all concessions, with a dexterity of falsehood which easily eluded the sluggish intelligence of the British envoy. However, at the beginning of May Bentinck obtained an order for the convocation of the Sicilian Parliament, a pacificatory measure which entitled him to send a part of the British garrison out of the island ; and having received at this time an urgent letter from Wellington, pressing for a diversion upon the east coast of Spain, he decided as a provisional arrangement to send thither a force of nearly seven thousand men under General Maitland. But even so he despatched the armament first to Mahon, where he flattered himself that its appearance would make as effectual a diversion as if it were actually disembarked on the Spanish coast ; and he still hoped in his heart to lead it in person to Italy. For Bentinck remained as enthusiastic as ever for a descent upon Italy, or indeed upon any country, other than Spain, where opportunity might offer. Thus upon hearing at the beginning of June that the Montenegrins were in insurrection against the French, he at once sent them twelve hundred men¹ and twelve vessels of the Sicilian flotilla. Yet at that very moment he was deplored the despatch of Maitland's detachment upon the ground that it was too weak to be of any service in Spain ; apparently blind to the fact that a larger force might have been spared had he not chosen to fritter away his strength upon his own petty projects for the enfranchisement of the world at large. There is

¹ 35th, 400 ; Corsicans, Calabrians, Greek L.I., 800. Total, 1200.

1812. no more fatal obstacle to human progress than the crude aspirations of ambitious mediocrity.¹

Maitland sailed on the 7th of June,² but after long battling with adverse winds, was still at Palermo on the 28th, when at last he was able to pass the straits and make his way to Minorca. From thence he sent word to General Roche at Alicante to join him with his divisions of Spaniards, and to General Whittingham likewise to embark his corps, which had been raised for the defence of the Balearic Islands and lay in quarters there. Wellington's design was that Maitland should besiege Tarragona, but there were endless delays before he could leave Minorca ; and it should seem that the ships which alarmed Suchet on the 21st were only transports on their way to Alicante to pick up Roche. However, they were assumed to be British by Don José O'Donnell, the commander of the Spanish troops about Alicante, who, apparently afraid lest the red-coats should snatch laurels from him, advanced upon Castalla

June 21. on the same day with twelve thousand men. He was of course hopelessly beaten by half his own number of French with the loss of four thousand killed, wounded and taken, Roche's division alone having shown any firmness in the fight. The news of this defeat reached Wellington by the 3rd of August, but was outweighed by that of Maitland's approaching arrival ; and he therefore took no notice of it beyond directing General Ross to join Maitland with every man that he could spare of the garrison of Cartagena, and writing to

¹ Bentinck to Sec. of State, W.O., 19th, 20th, 22nd May ; 9th, 26th June ; F.O., 5th, 6th May ; 27th, 30th June 1812.

² Maitland's Force. Embarkation return of 25th June :

20th L.D.,	167	;	160 horses.	1/10th	935.
Foreign troop	71	;	75 "	1/58th	871.
R.A. and drivers	177	;	86 "	1/81st	1274.
Marine Artillery	30			4th Line K.G.L.	750.
R.E.	47			6th "	1064.
Staff Corps	14			det. Roll's	331.
				" Dillon's	554.
				" Calabrians	353.

Total : 6638 of all ranks.

Roche the curt reproof "I request that you may not 1812. be defeated again." It was enough for the British Commander that Suchet could not detach another man to westward so long as Maitland remained upon the coast ; and he ensured that Maitland should remain there by forbidding him—notwithstanding Bentinck's instructions—to quit it without express permission from the British Government.¹

Reviewing the entire situation Wellington resolved to march on Madrid, and either to bring Joseph to action or to force him to quit the capital. The reasons alleged for this decision were that he could not pursue Clauseau further without exposing his rear and communications to an incursion from the Army of the Centre, and also that his presence in King Joseph's capital would have a good effect in Europe. The various aspects of this decision will be better discussed at a later stage ; for the present it must suffice barely to record it. Leaving therefore at Cuellar Anson's brigade of Light Horse, Clinton's division of infantry and the five sickly battalions which had lately joined the army, Wellington marched on the 6th by Car-
bonero el Mayor, Segovia and San Ildefonso to the pass of the Guadarrama ; and on the 11th the advanced Aug. 6. guard pushed back the French cavalry and entered Las Rozas, a village within ten miles of Madrid. Here the Heavy Brigade and the 1st Light Battalion of the German Legion, together with two guns of Macdonald's troop of horse artillery, halted ; while the four remaining guns and a brigade of Portuguese horse under Colonel d'Urban pushed forward for another three miles to the village of Majadahonda ; a party of twenty German dragoons riding ahead of all to preserve contact with the enemy. Joseph, who had already begun the evacuation of the capital, desiring to gain time, directed General Treilhard to hold back the Allies, and ordered Palombini's Italian cavalry, a brigade of infantry, and

¹ *Wellington Desp.*, to Roche, 3rd, 5th Aug. ; to Ross, 5th Aug. ; to Maitland, 16th Aug. 1812.

1812. four guns to his support.¹ Treilhard accordingly faced Aug. 11. about, and the German dragoons hastened back to give the alarm ; whereupon D'Urban brought forward his four guns, and, observing Treilhard's leading squadrons to be far in advance of the main body, led his three regiments to the attack.

The Portuguese followed him for a short distance, and then wheeling about galloped away to the rear, leaving the guns to their fate. By great exertion the gunners limbered up their pieces, and began to withdraw them, but the ground was unfavourable for rapid movement. One gun escaped ; but two others were overturned, and, the carriage of a third being broken, all three fell into the enemy's hands. Meanwhile, the French dragoons thundered on, and bursting into Las Rozas on the heels of the flying Portuguese caught the Germans unprepared. These last had unsaddled for the first time for three days, and the men were in their shirt-sleeves, washing themselves and leading their horses to water, when at about five o'clock the trumpet sounded the alarm. Two companies of the Light Battalion hastily formed in advance of the village, and with two small bodies of dragoons, collected in a hurry by their captains, checked the first onslaught of the enemy. Thus time was gained for the rest of the battalion to form in the market-place, and for four squadrons of the German dragoons to be mounted and arrayed. The Portuguese rallied and came forward ; and the enemy was borne back to Majadahonda, where being reinforced by men and guns they resumed the offensive. Thereupon the Portuguese for the second time turned tail, and the German Dragoons were obliged to retire once more to Las Rozas, with the loss of their brigadier,

¹ Treilhard's division of dragoons consisted of the 13th, 18th, 19th and 22nd, about 1700 of all ranks. The regiments attached to Palombini were the Dragons Napoléon, about 470 of all ranks, and the Lancers of Berg, perhaps 400 men. Chasse's brigade was made up of the 2nd Nassau Infantry and the Spanish regiment La Mancha, about 1450 strong. Treilhard's force, including artillery, was about 4000 men.

de Joncquières, and a few men captured. By this time, 1812. however, the Light Battalion had established itself in a Aug. 11. house from which the men were able to open a telling fire upon the French. Two squadrons of the Dragoons charged the enemy with considerable effect ; and, upon the approach of Ponsonby's brigade of cavalry and of another light battalion of the Legion, Treilhard drew off his troops, abandoning the three captured cannon. The loss of the Allies amounted to fifty-three of all ranks killed, ninety-eight wounded, and forty-five taken, as well as eighty-one horses ; and it must be regretfully confessed that the mishap, which Wellington described as "a devil of an affair," was entirely due to the misconduct of the Portuguese. One point of interest in the action is that it went near to destroy the reputation of Wellington as a commander who had never lost a gun. Another point, which has not heretofore been noticed, was that the French casualties must have been appreciable, for in the five regiments of cavalry engaged, one officer was killed and fifteen wounded, making the total loss of officers exactly the same as that of the Allies. From this it is reasonable to conclude that at least one hundred and fifty of the French rank and file must have fallen.¹

Meanwhile Joseph was painfully retreating, encumbered by a huge convoy of two thousand vehicles and a mass of ten thousand fugitives from Madrid, amid disgraceful scenes of plunder and indiscipline. On the 12th he halted at Valdemoro ; on the 13th he Aug. 12. pushed his vast and unwieldy charge over the Tagus at Aranjuez ; and advancing amid stifling heat through Albacete and Chinchilla, he arrived on the 31st at Valencia. The march was distressing beyond description. The inhabitants, who had been shamefully ill-treated by Montbrun's troops on their return from Alicante, had carried off their cattle and destroyed their ovens and mills ; so that neither meat nor flour were obtainable.

¹ The best account of this skirmish is that given by Schwertfeger, i. 390.

1812. The rivulets were dried up, and the wells were soon exhausted by the multitude of the thirsty ; and the troops, receiving neither regular rations nor water, took leave of all order and discipline. Soldiers and private servants went marauding together, but few ever returned ; for the guerillas hung upon the flanks and rear of the column, and slaughtered all stragglers without mercy. Joseph's Spanish troops deserted almost to a man to join these bloodthirsty bands ; and yet such was the misery and hardship of the journey that many Spanish civilians turned back, preferring to risk their lives rather than endure such extremity of suffering.

Aug. 12. On the 12th Wellington entered Madrid amidst scenes of wild enthusiasm, ladies even throwing down their shawls for his horse to tread on, while others clung to his stirrup and kissed his boots. There was, however, a garrison of some two thousand men besides invalids, left in a retrenched post which had been fortified round the palace of the Retiro. The interior work consisted of a large square building, originally a porcelain factory, and hence called La China, with an octagonal star fort about it, and the exterior defences of an irregular bastioned enclosure of nine fronts. Though strong enough to form a protection against guerillas, these fortifications could not resist a regular attack ; and Joseph could only excuse himself for leaving troops in them by pleading that, without a guard, the invalids might have been murdered by the populace. He made, however, the further mistake of providing a garrison insufficient to defend the exterior lines, and too large to be contained in the octagon ; besides which he gave orders, a copy of which was found by the British, that if seriously assailed the garrison were to withdraw at once into the interior *enceinte*. Accordingly after a feint attack

Aug. 13. on the night of the 13th, heavy guns were brought to batter La China and the inner defences, and preparations were made to storm the exterior works, when the commandant, knowing the weakness of the post, surrendered. Over two thousand effective officers and

men, and over four hundred and thirty sick in hospital, 1812. were thereby made prisoners of war, and upwards of Aug. 13. one hundred and eighty guns, twenty thousand muskets, a large supply of stores and munitions of war, together with two eagles, all became prize of the victors. Then followed a general sweeping in of small French detachments. Tordesillas with about two hundred and fifty men had already surrendered to Santocildes on the 5th ; Guadalajara with seven hundred men yielded to the Empecinado on the 15th ; Astorga with twelve hundred men¹ capitulated on the 18th ; and on the 25th the guerilla chief Villacampa captured three hundred men of a force which was escorting the garrison of Cuenca to Valencia. It seems extraordinary that so many unfortunate French troops, beginning with those in the forts of Salamanca, should have been thus uselessly sacrificed. Poor Clausel, after such a defeat as that of Salamanca, may perhaps be pardoned for not summoning the garrisons of Zamora, Toro and Tordesillas to meet him at Valladolid ; but Joseph might easily have called in that of Guadalajara, and it was against all military advice that he had left two thousand men in the Retiro. Jourdan explains that the King was afraid of the outcry that might be raised at Paris if he evacuated the capital absolutely ; and it seems probable that both Joseph and Marmont were afraid to abandon works which had been built by Napoleon's command, hoping perhaps to relieve them from the pressure of the Allies before they should fall, and to pay court to His Majesty by flattering allusions to the Imperial wisdom and fore-thought which had ordained their construction. This was part of the base sycophancy which characterised the later years of the Empire, and was not a little encouraged by the Emperor's habit of reasoning from things not as they were but as he wished them to be. Yet in justice to Napoleon it must be admitted that he pardoned any fault more readily than downright stupidity.

Meanwhile Clausel, upon hearing of Wellington's

¹ 3rd and 4th batts. of the 25th Light.

1812. march to Madrid, decided to make an effort to rescue the detachments at Zamora, Toro and Astorga. Owing to the exhausted condition of the country the disorder among his troops had been very great, but he had tried and shot over fifty marauders and made some stern examples among his officers ; and by these means he had succeeded in collecting and reorganising an army of some twenty-four thousand men with fifty guns. He therefore bore down upon Valladolid with his whole force, his advanced guard being sighted by the British patrols

Aug. 13. twenty miles north-east of that city on the 13th. Wellington, anticipating some such movement, had advised Santocildes to fall back to the Esla if he thought himself too weak to oppose the enemy, and now ordered Clinton to march from Cuellar to Olmedo as if to cross the Douro at Valladolid. Santocildes retired accordingly, but Clinton, far from making the movement prescribed to him, fell back to Arevalo ; whereupon

Aug. 16. Clausel, entering Valladolid without alarm on the 16th, despatched Foy westward with two divisions and a thousand cavalry to rescue the posts on the river and at

Aug. 17. Astorga. On the 17th Foy reached Toro, and withdrew the garrison and stores. Turning thence north-westward to Benavente, he overthrew the Spanish rear-guard which

Aug. 20. disputed the passage of the Esla, and on the 20th reached La Bañeza, where he learned to his dismay that Astorga had surrendered thirty-six hours before. He therefore wheeled to the south and advanced upon Carvajales, hoping to annihilate a detachment of four thousand Portuguese militia under Silveira, which was in that quarter. This operation, however, miscarried, the French cavalry showing culpable lack of enterprise ; and Silveira safely effected his retreat across the Portuguese frontier. Much disgusted, Foy continued his march to Zamora, which he entered on the 25th

Aug. 29. and occupied until the 29th, when upon the summons of Clausel he returned—taking the garrison with him —to Tordesillas, to rejoin the main army.¹

¹ Girod de l'Ain. *Vie militaire du Général Foy*, pp. 181-182.

Wellington for his part professed not only in-^{1812.} difference as to the relief of the French garrisons, but a positive desire that, in some way or another, they should be taken off his hands. "Anything," he wrote to his brother, "is better than that I should have to attack and carry these places"; for he grudged the time and the lives that would be spent in a series of little sieges. On the 16th, 17th and 18th he transferred Aug. 16-^{18.} the whole of his force, except the Third and Light Divisions and Alten's brigade of cavalry, from Madrid to the Escorial; and towards the end of the month he ordered the First, Fifth and Seventh Divisions, Pack's and Bradford's brigades of Portuguese, Ponsonby's brigade of light cavalry and Bock's of heavy dragoons to march to Arevalo. Himself leaving Madrid on the 1st of September, he reached Arevalo on the 3rd, and Sept. 1. on the 4th led his army upon Valladolid. On the 18th of August Clausel had driven Anson's cavalry after a sharp skirmish to the south bank of the Douro, but had not followed him further; and on the day of Wellington's march the French General occupied Tordesillas and Valladolid in force, keeping a thousand men at Simancas, where he had ruined the bridge over the Pisuerga. On the 6th of September the Allied army passed the Douro Sept. 6. by the fords of Herrera de Duero, and found the French in position at Arroyo de la Cisterniga; but in the night Clausel withdrew his troops and, having blown up the bridge at Simancas at noon of the 7th, fell back up the Sept. 7. right bank of the Pisuerga to Dueñas, the cavalry of the Allies marching parallel with him on the opposite side of the stream. On the 8th Wellington halted, Sept. 8. being anxious for the arrival of Santocildes whom he had summoned to him with the Army of Galicia;¹ but that General did not appear; and on the 9th the Sept. 9. leading division of the Allies crossed the Pisuerga at Cabezon, while the rear moved to the same place from Valladolid. Clausel therefore withdrew quietly from Dueñas on the 10th; and continued to retire in a Sept. 10.

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Santocildes, 12th Sept. 1812.

1812. leisurely fashion to Magaz and Torquemada, where on Sept. 12. the 12th he crossed the Pisuerga and took the road to Burgos. Anson on this day missed an opportunity of inflicting some loss upon the enemy's rear-guard ; and Clausel pursued his unhasting way up the valley of Arlanzon, little pressed by his opponents, until on the Sept. 16. 16th he took up a position to cover Burgos. On that day, however, Castaños with over eleven thousand men joined the Allies, and Wellington made dispositions for an attack ; but Clausel was too cunning to be caught, and manœuvring with great skill, retreated again with no more than trifling loss to his rear-guard. On the night Sept. 17. of the 17th he withdrew his troops through Burgos, leaving a garrison of two thousand men under General Dubreton in the Castle, and fell back north-eastward to Briviesca and Pancorbo.

This retrograde march of Clausel has received great commendation from the pen of Napier, who alleges that he offered battle in nine different positions, and was only dislodged by flanking movements on the part of Wellington. There is, however, no trace of any such manœuvres to be found in the journals of Tomkinson and Burgoyne, who took part in the pursuit ; and the slowness of Wellington's advance, which is admitted by all authorities including himself, was due wholly to the erratic movements of Santocildes, who did not reach Valladolid until a week later than had been expected of him.¹ More relevant is Napier's comment that if Wellington had marched straight upon Valladolid from Segovia, he might have cut off Foy from Clausel ; and that, if he had taken with him another division and pressed due north upon Burgos by the route of the Somosierra and Aranda de Duero, he would have threatened the flank of Clausel's line of retreat, while Clinton and the Spaniards closed upon his rear. The historian's conjecture is that want of money and of transport prevented the British General from taking the inhospitable route over the Somosierra,

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Santocildes, 12th Sept. 1812.

and this may well have been so ; but it is more likely, 1812. in my opinion, that Wellington felt unable to trust Clinton and Santocildes any longer in independent command, and, as was so often the case, took upon himself the work of a divisional leader as well as that of Commander-in-Chief.

However, he was now before the fortress which, if captured, might serve to cover the territory which his victories had gained for him ; and by this time he was fairly well apprised of the progress of affairs in other parts of the Peninsula. Maitland after long delays had sailed with his detachment and some two thousand of Whittingham's Spaniards from Catalonia, and had appeared before Palamos on the 31st of July. After discussion with the Spanish commander, however, it was decided that the siege of Tarragona was too hazardous an operation for the Allied forces at disposal ; and Maitland proceeded towards Valencia, but changed his mind in mid voyage and bore up for Alicante, where he landed on the 9th of August. The French Aug. 9. troops stationed to the south of the Jucar at the moment did not exceed five or six thousand, which were lying about Alcoy and Castalla ; but before Maitland could collect supplies and transport, Suchet had shifted this detachment northward to San Felipe, and reinforced it considerably. None the less the British General advanced as far as Elda, about eighteen miles north and west of Alicante, where on the 17th he heard of Aug. 17. the junction of the Army of the Centre with that of Valencia, and perforce fell back to his starting-point. Including the Sixty-seventh and Watteville's, which he found at Alicante on his arrival, Maitland had now some eight thousand British troops, besides the Spanish divisions of Roche and Whittingham, which amounted to as many more ; but being out of health, much troubled by the difficulty of feeding his Spaniards and disturbed by a rumour that Soult also was moving upon Valencia, he was reduced to rather an abject state of nervousness, and began to hint at a re-embarkation. Wellington

1812. would not hear of anything of the kind. He had Aug. received authority from England to take Maitland's detachment under his command ; and he ordered that general positively to stay where he was, heartening him with the assurance that he needed only to stand his ground with firmness in order to gain not only security but honour. Sixteen thousand men, with transports riding on the sea at their backs, were a force that Joseph could not dare to leave behind him unless carefully watched by a considerable number of troops.¹

All therefore was satisfactory so far as Suchet's army was concerned : as regards Soult's proceedings Wellington was for some time in doubt. Even on the 18th of August he wrote of his intentions to invade Andalusia in September ; but a week later he heard credible reports that Soult was contemplating a general movement, probably towards Granada and Valencia ; and by the 8th of September he had received definite information that the siege of Cadiz had been raised. As a matter of fact Soult had not received the King's order for the evacuation of Andalusia in any very friendly spirit. Upon the 8th of August on the first rumours of the defeat of Salamanca, he had urged Joseph to bring the Army of the Centre and part of the Army of Portugal by the pass of Despeña Perros into Andalusia ; to employ the most demoralised and least efficient of them in holding the necessary posts in the province ; and to liberate the Army of the South—thus augmented to fifty-five or sixty thousand men—for active operations.² Soult reckoned that in six weeks all would be ready for entry upon this new campaign.

¹ W.O. *Corres.* Maitland to Sec. of State, 24th July, 30th Aug., 19th Sept. 1812. *Wellington Desp.* To Maitland, 29th, 30th Aug., 20th Sept. 1812.

² Soult, it must be mentioned, always grossly exaggerated the numbers of Hill, when urging this plan. In his letters of 8th Aug. he ascribes to Hill 10 regiments (not battalions) of British infantry ; and 7 (instead of 6) regiments of British cavalry ; and gives reports of 10,000 more British infantry and some Italian cavalry as about to join him.

On the 12th of August, after receiving Joseph's instructions to evacuate Andalusia, he urged the same point with still greater eagerness. The King, he said, should lead to Andalusia all the troops that he could collect of the Armies of the Centre, of Portugal and of Aragon, even at the sacrifice of evacuating Valencia. From the moment when seventy or eighty thousand French should be concentrated in the south, the theatre of war would be changed, and the Army of Portugal would be free. Then it could either return to the Tagus, or hold Burgos and the left bank of the Ebro until reinforcements should arrive from France ; for, even if the Allies were masters of the country between the Ebro and the Sierra Morena, they would be little the better for it. On the other hand the loss of Andalusia and the raising of the siege of Cadiz were events that would make themselves felt all over Europe.¹

The great English historian of the war has blamed Joseph severely for not appreciating the grandeur and vigour of Soult's conception. And yet it must be confessed that the plan was extremely vague. There appears in Soult's despatches a breezy indifference whether the force withdrawn from the centre and north of Spain to the south should include the entire Armies of Aragon and Portugal, or one of them only, or parts of both, or the whole of one and part of the other. The great point made by the Marshal was that Madrid and even Valencia were not worth holding in comparison with Andalusia ; and that the abandonment of the country between the Ebro and the Sierra Morena to the Allies was, relatively speaking, an unimportant matter. This may have been a sound contention ; but Soult never directly faced the question whether communication with France was or was not to be sacrificed ;² nor was he

¹ Soult to Joseph, 8th Aug. (*Archives de la Guerre*) ; 12th Aug. 1812. Ducasse, ix. 65.

² Napier—in what purports to be a quotation from Soult's despatches—assumes that the line of communications by the east coast (a very circuitous route from France to Seville) was to be maintained. I can find no sign of this in any of Soult's letters.

1812. clear as to the various stations in Aragon and Central Aug. Spain which were to be maintained. He specified by name the Retiro, Toledo, and the pass of the Guadarrama—all three of them indefensible—as posts that should be occupied in sufficient strength; and he certainly intended to keep up all existing garrisons in Andalusia as well as to continue the blockade of Cadiz. But these various places were rendered safe not by the troops which actually held them, but by mobile columns which could revictual them and hurry at any time to their assistance. Did he intend to leave these isolated detachments to the tender mercies of the guerilla-bands? In that case they must without exception have fallen within three months; and the French host in Spain would have been very seriously weakened. Or did he purpose still to retain a surplus of troops for petty expeditions? In that case his army for the field must have been considerably reduced.

What after all was the whole design of Wellington's operations? Simply to force the French to concentrate, so as to give free opportunities to the guerilla-bands. Soult therefore in assembling sixty or eighty thousand, or one hundred and twenty thousand men¹ in the south was merely playing the game of the Allies, unless he could be sure of expelling the British from the Peninsula. How could he feel sure of any such thing? Western Andalusia is certainly dangerously close to Portugal when observed on the map; but the portion of Portugal that really was of importance to Wellington was Lisbon. Now, the lower Tagus being unbridged, and the command of the sea in the hands of the Allies, Lisbon could only be approached by a French army—no matter what its starting-point—from the north. How Soult would have made his way to the decisive battle-field at the gate of Lisbon must remain a matter of conjecture; but it is certain that he must have forced

¹ This last figure is Napier's, not Soult's; the Marshal never presuming to reckon the field-army at more than eighty thousand.

the lines of Torres Vedras, a feat which he could not have accomplished without heavy artillery. Nor is it easy to see how he could have brought forward such artillery, together with ammunition sufficient for a siege, without a bridge either over the Guadiana or over the Tagus. But, assuming that he had made himself master of the bridges of Badajoz and Abrantes, his line of communication with Seville from, say, Santarem, would have been over two hundred and fifty miles long, which could not have been properly and safely guarded without diminution of the fighting troops actually at the front. Meanwhile Wellington, having brought all his force, British, Portuguese regulars, and Portuguese militia, within the lines, would have had more than enough men to repel any army that Soult could by any possibility lead against him ; and the experiences of Massena in the winter of 1810–1811 would have been repeated with, probably, additional difficulties for Soult. For while the offensive movements of the French were confined to the small space between the Lower Tagus and the sea, the guerillas would have wrought havoc among such isolated posts of the enemy as remained, eating up a large proportion of them piecemeal. Lastly, if upon Soult's ultimate retreat Wellington had sent a British force by sea to Huelva, he might have captured Seville, and left the Marshal without any magazine of warlike stores nearer than Burgos and Barcelona. It seems to me therefore that Soult's plan, though it would undoubtedly have brought Wellington back to Portugal, could only have ended in failure, and, if he had ventured on an assault upon Torres Vedras, most probably in disaster.

In the days that followed the receipt of Joseph's letter Soult pushed forward the siege-works before Cadiz with the utmost vigour, maintaining always a sharp cannonade. In reply to his protests Joseph wrote to him on the 17th of August a second letter calling upon him to obey orders or resign his command ; but it is probable that the missive did not reach

1812. the Marshal before he had himself made preparations to evacuate Andalusia. Meanwhile in pursuance of Wellington's desire that a diversion should be made to alarm the force besieging Cadiz, General Cooke

Aug. 9. had on the 9th of August embarked eighteen hundred British and Portuguese under Skerrett at Cadiz,¹ to join twice that number of Spaniards under General La Cruz Murgeon in an attack from the side of Huelva. Skerrett landed at Huelva on the 12th; and the troops prepared to attack the Castle of Niebla, which, however, was evacuated and blown up by the French on the same evening. The expedition seems then to have been delayed for some days, probably

Aug. 22. to collect transport; for on the 22nd Murgeon had advanced no further than to Manzanilla. On the 24th Skerrett with a detachment of British and Spanish drove out a French advanced post from San Lucar la Mayor, twelve miles west of Seville; and on the night of the 26th, hearing that the French had raised the siege of Cadiz on the 24th and were preparing to withdraw, Murgeon decided to move on at once to

Aug. 27. Seville. Early on the morning of the 27th his force engaged the rear-guard of the enemy outside the western suburbs, entered the streets after some smart skirmishing, and made a rush for the bridge over the Guadalquivir, which was carried by the grenadiers of the British Guards before the French could destroy it. The enemy, who appear to have numbered some three thousand, were taken by surprise, and evidently gave way to panic; for they were driven out of the city after a very poor resistance with the loss of several killed and wounded, besides two hundred prisoners and two guns captured. The casualties of Skerrett's detachment did not exceed sixteen killed and wounded.² That

¹ Det. 2nd Hussars K.G.L.; det. R.A.; det. 3/1st Guards; det. 2/87th; det. 2/95th; det. 20th Portuguese. *Total*, 69 officers, 1730 N.C.O. and men.

² Skerrett's report and a few words from Gough (Rait, i. 99) tell us all that we know of this affair.

the speedy evacuation of Seville was unlooked for in 1812. evident from the fact that two hundred and forty-two Aug. pieces of ordnance in good order were taken in the foundry, besides large quantities of merchandise and of victuals, and the private baggage of four French generals.¹

Meanwhile, Soult had withdrawn from before Cadiz, leaving in his batteries two hundred and eighty-one pieces of various calibres, for the most part disabled for immediate service, though reparable. He had been on the point of marching for Toledo, which had been abandoned by the French and occupied by a party of guerillas, when he received through D'Erlon the intelligence that Joseph had retired to Valencia. He therefore took the route by Granada and Murcia, still, however, professing to credit a report that Wellington was sending a strong detachment into Andalusia by the pass of Despeña Perros.² On the 8th of September Sept. 8. Wellington, though not yet quite satisfied as to Soult's true direction, sent orders to Hill to pass the Tagus at Almaraz. The letter, as we have seen, reached Sir Rowland on the 13th, his head-quarters being then at Villanueva de la Serena. He at once marched for Medellin, where he crossed the Guadiana, and proceeding thence by Miajadas, Truxillo, and Jaraicejo, reached Almaraz on the 20th, Talavera on the 27th, and Toledo on the 30th, finally halting at Aranjuez in the first days of October. During this interval Skerrett, after driving the French rear-guard from Seville, had halted at Alcala, whither Cooke brought up additional British troops from Cadiz, equipping them for service in expectation of Wellington's orders. On the 28th of September these orders arrived, and Skerrett was directed to lead some forty-five hundred men to Truxillo, while Cooke retained command of over four thousand more, besides the detachment at Cartagena, which were assigned as garrisons for

¹ Return in Arteche, xii. 481.

² Arch. de la Guerre. Soult to Joseph, 26th Aug. 1812.

1812. Cadiz and Tarifa.¹ Thus all measures had been taken Sept. to assemble every possible man of the Allies in Central Spain ; and Wellington, who had been advanced to the dignity first of an earl and then of a marquis for his successes since the beginning of the year, was free to take in hand the siege of Burgos.

The country about the upper waters of the Arlanzon consists of chalk downs naturally escarp'd ; and it is upon a chalk hill, rising high and abruptly from the north side of the river that the Castle of Burgos stands, with the town spread out at its foot. Its defences were limited to a triple enceinte, about twelve hundred yards in extreme length by seven hundred in extreme width. The first or outermost of these was composed of a mediaeval scarp-wall, improved by an earthen parapet, and strengthened by flanking works of ingenious contrivance. The second line was to all purposes a field-work, well palisaded. The third or innermost line was of like nature with the second, but revetted and covered by a ditch thirty feet wide, while within and at the summit of the hill were a building called the White Church, of little defensive value, and the ancient keep, converted by the French into an interior retrenchment with a new casemated battery bearing the name of Napoleon. Thus the fortress was not formidable,

¹ Skerrett's detachment : det. 2nd Hussars K.G.L. ; 2 cos. R.A. ; 3/1st Guards ; det. 2/47th ; 2/87th ; det. 2/95th ; 20th Portuguese ; Staff Corps. Total, 154 officers, 4348 N.C.O. and men fit for duty ; 422 sick.

Cooke's command (Cadiz) : det. R.A. ; 5 cos. Wattevilles ; 2 cos. Chasseurs Britanniques. 32 officers, 1358 N.C.O. and men.

Isla (Cadiz) : det. 2nd Hussars K.G.L. (dismounted) ; dets. R.E., R.A. ; 2/59th ; det. batt. for foreign recruits. Total, 65 officers, 1710 N.C.O. and men.

Tarifa : det. R.E. and R.A. ; det. batt. for foreign recruits. Total, 7 officers, 179 N.C.O. and men.

Carthagena : dets. R.E. and R.A. ; 2/67th ; 5 cos. Wattevilles. Total, 45 officers, 1189 N.C.O. and men. 2/59th had landed at Cadiz from England on the 7th of Sept. Cooke to Sec. of State, 7th, 28th Sept., 25th Oct. 1812. Wellington Desp., to Cooke, 9th Sept. 1812.

and it was the less so inasmuch as it was commanded 1812. towards the north-east at a range of three hundred yards by a spur of another chalk ridge, called the heights of St. Michael, which rises one hundred and fifty feet above it, and is separated from it by a deep combe.¹ Napoleon had ordered the fortification of these heights by a horn-work containing nearly as much ground as the Castle itself, but this was still incomplete. The scarp was steep and high, but the counter-scarp was of less than half its altitude, the branches were imperfect, and the rear had only recently been closed by an exceedingly strong palisade. Nevertheless the interior was commanded by the guns of the Napoleon battery, and its branches were well flanked by the guns of the Castle.

On the 19th of September Burgos was invested Sept. 19. by the First, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Divisions of infantry, aided by the two independent Portuguese brigades of Pack and McMahon; the Sixth Division taking up ground on the left bank of the Arlanzon, while the remainder forded the river, and ascending the heights of St. Michael drove the enemy from three flèches in advance of the horn-work. The rest of the army was then posted astride of the road to France at Monasterio de Rodilla, some nine miles to the north-east; and the engineers laid their plans for the siege. The south-western end of the Castle was the point selected for the attack, partly because the eastern and southern sides were covered by the town, partly because in that particular quarter the front was smaller and the lines weaker than elsewhere, while the fall of the ground was so rapid that the guns above could not be sufficiently depressed to sweep it. It was resolved that on the first night the horn-work should be stormed and that a battery should be erected under cover of a knoll just outside the western angle, from whence the guns could play upon the Castle under shelter from

¹ Seen from the horn-work the Castle appears not better than 100 yards distant; seen from the Castle the horn-work seems more nearly at its true distance—a singular optical illusion.

1812. the fire of Fort Napoleon. The south-western face Sept. 19. was then to be approached by sap, and the scarp of each enceinte in succession was to be blown up by mines, and assaulted under fire of the battery near the horn-work. The only discouraging circumstance was that the siege-train counted but three eighteen-pounder cannon and five twenty-four-pounder howitzers, the latter being short brass guns, very useless for a siege and most inaccurate in their fire ; whereas the garrison had nine heavy guns, eleven field-pieces, and six mortars or howitzers mounted in batteries, with all the reserve artillery of the Army of Portugal to replace them if disabled.

However, no time was lost in preparing for the assault on the horn-work ; and it was arranged that two storming parties should fall upon the salient angles of the two demi-bastions, and enter the ditch at the point where the counter-scarp was low. A firing party of one hundred and fifty men of the Forty-second was at the same time to move straight upon the front of the work, halt at the edge of the ditch, and fire upon the garrison so as to enable the storming parties to plant their ladders at the scarp and carry the work by escalade. Pack offered his Portuguese brigade for the chief attack, and was permitted to undertake it. At the same time the light companies of the Guards and of Stirling's brigade¹ under Major Somers Cocks,² supported by the Forty-second, were directed to move round the rear of the work, so as to prevent the arrival of reinforcements, and, if feasible, to break into the gorge. At eight o'clock³ the assault was

¹ Stirling of the Forty-second had succeeded Wheatley in the command of the 2nd brigade of the 1st division on the 11th Sept. 1/26th had been sent back to garrison in Lisbon, so that the brigade now consisted of 2/24th, 1/42nd, 1/79th. The 2nd batt. of the 42nd had been drafted into the 1st, and the cadre sent home.

² He had been recently promoted from the Sixteenth Light Dragoons into the Seventy-ninth.

³ This was the hour fixed by Wellington ; French accounts call it 8.30.

delivered, but with many faults in the execution. The 1812. firing party being at once discovered by the enemy was Sept. 19. greeted by a heavy discharge of musketry ; whereupon the stormers, contrary to orders, returned answering volleys which they continued to the edge of the counterscarp, with the result that before they could reach the ditch they were almost annihilated. Meanwhile a body of Highlanders, who carried the ladders for the Portuguese, planted them against the scarp and led the way to the summit ; but the Portuguese would not follow, and the escalade was a total failure. Cocks, however, led his party to the gorge, under a fire from the Castle which laid low nearly half of his men, climbed the palisades, and drove his opponents to join their comrades, who were all of them in the ditch. Separating his men into two divisions, he left one to guard the sally-port into the ditch, and advanced with the other to the eastern demi-bastion, where his fire speedily put an end to resistance. In desperation the French made a rush by the sally-port, overthrew by sheer weight the weak force that was stationed there, and swarmed into the interior of the work. But Cocks, charging with the bayonet, drove them headlong through the gorge with the loss of nearly two hundred killed, wounded, and taken. The entire credit of this success belonged to Cocks, who, if properly supported, would have captured every soul of the garrison. The Allies suffered heavily, their casualties numbering four hundred and twenty killed, wounded, and missing, of whom two hundred and five belonged to the Forty-second. Altogether, except to Cocks's detachment, it was not a creditable affair ; and the only excuse that Wellington could find for it was the inexperience of the Forty-second Highlanders.¹

Upon reconnoitring the Castle from the heights of

¹ I have followed chiefly Tomkinson's account (*Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, p. 206), supplemented by the narratives of Jones and Napier. The story given in *Personal Narrative of a Private in the 42nd* is worthless.

1812. St. Michael Wellington did not conceal his misgivings that the means at his command were inadequate to the capture of the fortress. Indeed his first sight of Burgos had greatly astonished and disappointed him,¹ for he had been led to expect that it was an insignificant place with slight temporary works. His only hope lay in the facts that the supply of water was deficient, and that the magazines of provisions were in a situation which might enable him to set them on fire. It was disquieting also to learn that a draft of seven thousand men had reached the Army of Portugal from France, and that more were expected. However, a lodgement was at once made in the body of the horn-work, despite Sept. 20. the fire from the Castle ; and on the night of the 20th the construction of a first battery as also of its trenches of communication to rear was begun just to westward of the gorge. The enemy kept up a perpetual cannonade upon these works, but with small results, owing to the protection afforded by the ground. On Sept. 22. the night of the 22nd two eighteen-pounders and three field howitzers were mounted in the First Battery ; and the building of a second was commenced in the actual gorge of the horn-work. At midnight an attempt was made to escalade the outermost line of the western front, where the wall, though twenty-three to twenty-five feet high, was unflanked ; a Portuguese battalion being appointed at the same time to assault at a weak point of the southern front which was defended only by a small guard. Four hundred men drawn from all the battalions of the First Division were to form in a hollow road within sixty yards of the ditch, where half of them were to line the bank and keep down the fire of the defenders, while the remainder should ascend the scarp by five ladders.

The attempt was a complete failure. The Portuguese would not face the bullets even of the feeble French guard opposed to them ; the firing party

¹ Sir F. Ponsonby's *MS. Journal*. He was at the outposts when Wellington first examined Burgos through his field-glass.

through some mistake or confusion rushed with the ^{1812.} stormers into the ditch ; the brave officers and men Sept. 22. who led the escalade were easily overcome ; those behind them suffered heavily from combustibles and explosives rolled down by the enemy upon them ; and in fifteen minutes the four hundred fell back with the loss of half their numbers. This again was an ill-managed affair, which discouraged the Allies and heartened the enemy.¹ Burgoyne was of opinion that the attack would have succeeded if the Portuguese had behaved as was expected of them ; but the compilation of so small a body as four hundred men from several different battalions was in itself a great blunder ; for the men, not knowing each other nor the officers, could not work with the unity and confidence that would have inspired the like numbers drawn from a single battalion. The enemy's casualties did not exceed twenty-two killed and wounded.

Forty-eight hours having been thus lost to no purpose, reversion was made to the original plan of mining the outer line of defence. The hollow road already mentioned was converted into a parallel on the night of the 23rd, Sept. 23. and a communication with it was traced from the suburb of San Pedro. Heavy rain, which began early in the night, concealed the new work until daylight of the 24th, when the enemy, by stationing marksmen behind a projecting palisade, did great execution among the besiegers ; and the inaccuracy of the British heavy howitzers was such that in a whole hour's firing not a single shot or shell touched the shelter wherein the sharpshooters were ensconced. These howitzers had now been moved into the First Battery, the eighteen-pounders having been transferred to the Second ; but by this time the ammunition of the Allies was growing scanty, and Wellington was obliged to apply to

¹ Wellington ascribed the mishap to neglect of his orders by the officer in command of the attack, who made no dispositions but rushed on like a common soldier, and was killed. Moreover, as the plan of attack was found by the enemy in his pocket, it could not be repeated. *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 23rd Nov.

1812. Sir Home Popham at Santander for powder. However, two galleries for two mines about sixty yards apart were begun on the western front, and zigzags were carried down from the horn-work towards a ledge of the hill below, where a trench was dug to give protection for a line of infantry. But the enemy were not idle, and by throwing stones, hand-grenades, and small shells into the advanced sap they annoyed the working parties greatly, while their artillery swept away the parapet of the new musketry-trench and rendered it useless.

At last, after much delay owing to the idleness of the British working parties and the skilful resistance of the French, one of the mines on the western face was

Sept. 29. completed and charged ; and the night of the 29th was appointed for the assault. Three hundred men were told off for the storming party, with a forlorn hope of an officer and twenty men. The mine was sprung at midnight ; and the French were so much panic-stricken by the explosion that the foremost of the forlorn hope —a sergeant and four men—reached the top of the parapet unopposed. But, owing to the mortality among officers of engineers, not one could be spared to guide the main body to the breach. The leader took his men too far to the west, and, finding the wall uninjured, returned to report that the mine had been a failure. The storming party was therefore recalled ; and by the time that the sergeant aforesaid could arrive to tell his story, the French had been so much reinforced at the threatened point that any further effort was hopeless. The Allies, having no ammunition to enable their artillery to play upon the breach, the French succeeded in retrenching it before daylight ; and thus many days' work was wholly thrown away.

Discouragement now seized upon the besieging force. Heavy rain increased the discomfort of the dangerous duty in the trenches ; the working parties, excepting those of the Guards, grew more than ever evasive and careless ; and discipline at large became sensibly relaxed. A new battery, the Third, which had been constructed

off the western face for the reception of Wellington's 1812. three solitary cannon, was knocked to pieces and one of Oct. 1. the guns was disabled before they could even open fire. Another battery, thrown up during the night a little to the north of the first, suffered the same fate ; the plunging shot from the Castle being too heavy for the parapet, and the enemy's gunners too well protected to be touched by musketry. On the following night, Oct. 2. which was very wet and stormy, the whole of the working parties—officers and men—except those of the Guards, absented themselves from duty, and provoked Wellington to issue a severe rebuke in General Orders. The two remaining eighteen-pounders were now brought back to their original place in the First Battery ; and on the 4th of October they and three howitzers reopened the Oct. 4. breach made by the explosion of the mine on the night of the 29th. Simultaneously the second mine a little to west of it was completed and charged. At five o'clock this mine was sprung, blowing many of the enemy into the air and making an extensive gap, which was promptly stormed by a party of the Twenty-fourth under Captain Hedderwick, while another detachment of the same regiment at the same moment carried the old breach. In a few minutes they had driven the garrison within the second line of defence, suffering no further loss than thirty-seven killed and two hundred and thirteen, including nine officers, wounded or missing. Sixty-eight of the casualties fell upon the Twenty-fourth, the remainder being divided among eighteen different corps besides the Portuguese. Among the wounded was Lieutenant-colonel John Jones, who is still remembered for his history of the sieges during this war.

Approaches were now opened towards the second line, the British howitzers being directed upon the palisades and the cannon upon a re-entrant angle in the northern face. By the evening of the 7th a good part Oct. 7. of the parapet had been battered down ; but the enemy fired briskly, disabling one of the two British guns, and

1812. rolling down shells upon the lodgement in the outer wall, which lay too low for the extreme angle of depression of their guns. Torrents of rain made work in the trenches extremely difficult, and at two o'clock on the Oct. 8. morning of the 8th the garrison by a sudden sortie drove away the guard from the outermost wall, and had levelled all the works and carried off the tools before the British troops, re-forming, chased them in turn back within the second line. Over two hundred of the besiegers fell in this affair, chief among them Colonel Charles Somers Cocks, who was shot dead in the act of rallying his men. On the following morning Wellington came, as was his habit during the siege, into General Frederick Ponsonby's room ; but, instead of addressing him, he walked up and down for some minutes in silence, then went to the door, said abruptly, "Cocks was killed last night," and walked out. The dead officer was buried with full military honours in compliment to his distinguished bravery ; and the expression of pain upon Wellington's face during the ceremony was so strongly marked that no one present, excepting D'Urban, presumed to approach him. Three times only in the course of his long life did men see the Iron Duke give way to tears ; but it is evident that he had a struggle to conceal his grief over the grave of Somers Cocks. "D'Urban," he said at last after a long silence, "had Cocks outlived these campaigns, which from the way he exposed himself was morally impossible, he would have become one of the first generals in England." Not until 1855 was some hint of Cocks's great services given to his countrymen in a short pamphlet published by one who, as a subaltern, had served with him in the Sixteenth Light Dragoons.¹ Not until 1895 was the full excellence of that service revealed by the publication of the journal of his own subaltern and close friend, Tomkinson, of the same regiment. With his memory

¹ Hugh Owen, later of the 7th and 18th Hussars, and afterwards of the Portuguese Army. The pamphlet is reprinted entire by Tomkinson, pp. 212-218 ; and see *Wellington Supp. Desp.* vii. 459.

thus embalmed alike by the testimony of his subordinates and by the praise of his great captain, who was even more chary of sentiment than of commendation, we may leave Somers Cocks to his rest beneath the walls of Burgos.

By this time the supply of musket-ammunition had fallen so low, owing to the perpetual fusillade maintained by the besieging infantry to supplement the want of artillery-fire, that the cannonade of the breach was discontinued, an assault being impossible until more cartridges should arrive. The guns were therefore employed in pouring red-hot shot upon the magazine ; but the effect after three days' experiment was found to be small, the roof of the building being never really kindled and the flames easily quenched. On the 10th Oct. 10. the shot for the howitzers was almost exhausted, and that for the cannon would have been equally scarce had not fallen French projectiles been collected which more or less fitted the bore. However, powder arrived from Popham's squadron, and a new gallery was begun near the eastern angle of the southern front towards the church of St. Roman which, though external to the defence, was maintained as a storehouse by the garrison. On the 11th the cannonade from the batteries of the Oct. 11. Allies practically ceased ; and the French took advantage of the circumstance to retrench the breach made in the second line. At last on the 15th fire was reopened from Oct. 15. the Second Battery from one sound and two damaged eighteen-pounders and from one howitzer, the object being to demolish the wall of the keep on which stood the Napoleon battery ; but within three-quarters of an hour these pieces were silenced by the heavier metal of the Castle. They were therefore turned once more upon the original breach in the second line, and with results so favourable that, had the stock of ammunition permitted, the gap would speedily have been made practicable for an assault. In the evening a supply of cannon-shot arrived from Ciudad Rodrigo ; but the British batteries were so much damaged by heavy rain during the night that the

1812. artillery was useless for offensive purposes throughout the whole of the next day. However, the gallery under Oct. 16. St. Roman's Church, having been pushed as far as was thought safe, was charged with nine hundred pounds of powder ; on the 17th and 18th the British ordnance, scanty and crippled though it was, swept away the retrenchments raised by the French behind the breach ; Oct. 18. and on the afternoon of the latter day Wellington issued his orders for the assault.

At half-past four the mine under St. Roman's Church was to be sprung, and the gap thus created was to be entered by a party of Spaniards and Portuguese under Colonel Brown. At the signal of the explosion two hundred of the Guards were to rush through the more easterly breach of the first line and escalade the second line ; while two hundred of the German Legion under Major Wurmb were to assault the breach of the second line ; both parties moving by fifties. The mine being duly sprung at a quarter to five made a large opening which was occupied by Brown's people in spite of the explosion of a counter-mine by the French. The Guards then advanced, escaladed the parapet and formed on the other side of it ; while Wurmb with one hundred men gallantly broke into the second line at the first assault. But the Germans instead of turning to their left to clear a stockade upon their flank, as they had been ordered, extended to their right to join the Guards. A few brave men of both parties actually entered the innermost line, where they were killed ; but the second hundred of the Germans never came forward, and the whole attack was inadequately supported. Dubreton at once threw his reserves upon the front and flank of the stormers, who were swept back to the first line, leaving more than half of their numbers killed and wounded behind them. No troops in the world could have behaved better, and Wellington in his despatch did full justice to their conduct, for they were cruelly cut up. The Coldstreams lost sixty killed and wounded, including four officers ; the Scots Guards

twenty-five, including two officers ; and the Germans 1812. seventy-five, including seven officers. Wurmb, who had distinguished himself by skill and bravery on many occasions, was among the killed. Altogether it was a disastrous little affair, which practically put an end to the siege. During the night teams were sent out to bring up two heavy cannon from Santander ; but this was only a blind, for on the 20th Wellington directed Oct. 20. all the ordnance to be withdrawn from the batteries, and quitted the lines to take personal command of the covering army, leaving Pack with from two to three thousand men to maintain the blockade. On the 21st Oct. 21. he ordered all stores and guns that could not be removed to be destroyed ; and accordingly the three eighteen-pounders were disabled and left upon the road. Early on the morning of the 22nd the troops Oct. 22. raised the siege. It had cost the British ninety-two officers and nineteen hundred and seventy-two men, a full third of whom were killed outright. The loss of the garrison did not exceed six hundred and seven, of whom one-half were killed or died of their wounds.

Beyond all question this abortive siege of Burgos was the most unsatisfactory operation on Wellington's part during the whole of the Peninsular War. The advance upon Madrid in 1809 had been hazardous, perhaps unduly rash ; yet it had at least been undertaken with confidence and executed with vigour. But the attack upon Burgos was initiated with misgiving and pursued with instability both of design and of purpose. To an army properly equipped with heavy artillery and trained engineers and sappers the capture of Burgos would have been a trifling episode ; but to one owning no more than the parody of a train—three heavy cannon with scanty ammunition, which had accompanied Wellington from Salamanca—it was a far more serious matter. Could he have brought forward more guns ? Napier hints that he might have obtained some, not only (as he ultimately did) from Popham, but also from Madrid. Sir Edward Pakenham in fact pledged him-

1812. self to borrow harness and animals of the officers in the capital and to send up some excellent guns from the Retiro. Pakenham's offer, however, was rejected ; and it may have been distrust of his brother-in-law's enthusiasm which caused Wellington to report to Lord Liverpool that he could not find the means of moving even one gun from Madrid.¹

What, then, was Wellington's actual intention ? Many years later he declared that, having snatched away more than one Indian fortress by escalade, he hoped to do the like with Burgos, but was foiled by the skill and resource of Dubreton. Yet at the outset he resolved, as we have seen, to make his breaches by mining—a method condemned by one of his best officers—and only attempted an escalade as a variant upon this procedure. Moreover, although he had adopted in great measure what may be termed the Indian system both at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, he shrank from hurling really strong and massive columns against Burgos, and seemed content to tap at the ramparts with little driblets of thirty and fifty men, and refused to listen to any remonstrance from his engineers. "Why," he said to Burgoyne, "expose more men than can ascend the ladders or enter the work at one time, when by this mode the support is ordered to be up in time to follow the tail of the preceding party close?" Yet it is only too certain that on more than one occasion the supports did not back the storming party closely, and that the failure of the assault was due precisely to this cause. Evidently the terrible losses at Badajoz had so deeply impressed Wellington's mind that he feared to incur them again. Hence his operations were a bad compound of scientific and unscientific measures. First he opened a battery in a very good position to break down the interior lines of the Castle as soon as the outer lines should be carried, and decided to breach the outer lines by mining. But to save time he made an attempt to carry the first line by

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Liverpool, 23rd Nov. 1812.

an escalade, which failed owing to bad management. 1812.
Next, he fell back on mining in earnest, and endeavoured to keep down the enemy's cannonade by musketry, an expedient which proved to be alike costly and futile. After this failure, he sprang the first mine, but to no purpose, for the storming party never found its way to the breach. Then he brought his cannon down from the summit of St. Michael's heights to the low ground, in order to batter a new breach ; with no result but the absolute destruction of one piece and some damage to the other two. Thereupon he replaced the cannon on the top of the hill, and resumed mining operations ; sprang the second mine ; and successfully mastered the outermost line of defences. But no impression whatever was made upon the enemy's batteries ; and the working parties, unprotected by the fire of artillery from their own side, idled and shirked in a disgraceful fashion. The Guards alone could be trusted to toil in the trenches bravely, cheerfully, and efficiently. After suffering heavy loss from Dubreton's sortie, Wellington resorted to red-hot shot to kindle the French magazines ; and, finally, after the springing of a third mine and the miscarriage of another assault, he abandoned the siege. Probably if he had launched a whole division in any one of the assaults he would have captured the place without greater loss of life than that which he actually suffered.

He excused himself in part by blaming his instruments. Thus he ascribed, doubtless with justice, his heavy loss in the storm of the horn-work to the inexperience of the Forty-second ; and he proceeded to say that he had neither trustworthy officers nor good troops, having left them (meaning the Third and Light Divisions) behind him at Madrid. Moreover, he noticed with surprise and dismay that, whether from want of pay or from some other cause, the Portuguese soldiers had greatly deteriorated.¹ We shall in the course of

¹ Wellington Desp., to Bathurst, 21st Sept.; to Beresford, 22nd Sept., 5th Oct. 1812.

1812. another year encounter a recurrence of this complaint, that only the Third and Light Divisions understood how to assault a breach ; but in the present instance it seems to me probable that the lack of keenness in the troops was due to two principal causes. The first was that the men were what is called stale, which means that they had had enough for the present of hardship, privation, and danger, and needed rest. They had been strenuously at work since January. In the course of six months they had delivered two assaults, the first very sharp and the second very bloody, and had fought one severe general action. The Light Division, after bearing the brunt at Ciudad Rodrigo, had suffered terribly at Badajoz ; and the Sixth not less terribly at Salamanca. The Third Division had lost large numbers in all three affairs, and the Fourth and Fifth in two of them, to say nothing of the fact that in both of the two last divisions their commanders, Cole and Leith, had been disabled by wounds. Drafts and reinforcements had indeed been received from both England and Gibraltar ; but Wellington complained that all of them were very sickly,¹ and absolutely untrained in marching. Practically therefore he had no fresh troops ; and it is well known to all military men that, when soldiers are wearied out with work, they become demoralised ; and that such demoralisation, being contagious, spreads very rapidly through an army. Moreover, the misery of the camp and trenches before Burgos under the deluge of the autumn rains was exceptional even in Spain. In the last days of the siege General Edward Paget arrived to take command of the First Division, bringing with him on his staff Colonel James Stanhope, the friend of Moore. "The First Division," wrote Stanhope in his Journal, "is halted or rather bogged between the Castle and Villa Toro. . . . I visited the trenches. They are the very devil, for if one is not drowned or choked in mud at the first boyau, one is nearly sure of being shot in the first line if above

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Bathurst, 27th Sept. 1812.

five feet high. I never saw anything like it. If you held up a cap, you had two or three balls through it at once." It was this state of things that the Allied troops endured for thirty-three days ; and, although the excellence of Dubreton's marksmen cannot be overpraised, yet it must be borne in mind that their advantages in respect of shelter, position, and immunity from fire of cannon were such as to make the contest very unfair, and therefore very discouraging to the besiegers.

In the second place Wellington's misgivings, not only as to the success of the siege, but as to the general situation and the whole course of his movements since the battle of Salamanca, undoubtedly reacted upon the spirit and *moral* of his troops. He may be pardoned if, on the evening of the victory, he found himself somewhat at a loss, for he was placed suddenly in a new and strange situation. Since the close of 1809 his army had acted as a moveable force to defend first Lisbon and then Portugal ; and the recapture of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, brilliant achievements though they were, were of importance chiefly in that they thrust back the French advanced bases from the Portuguese frontier. He was able of course to convert these fortresses into advanced bases for his own operations ; but what solid enterprise could he, with the force at his disposal, undertake ? Was it possible for him to do more than compel the French armies in the north to concentrate, so as to give full play to the guerillas, and then to retire before them to his old position on the Portuguese frontier ? As we have seen, he had actually sent back his heavy artillery and baggage towards Ciudad Rodrigo when Marmont (as Frederick Ponsonby said) outmanœuvred himself on the plain of the Arapiles, and enabled Wellington to strike a telling blow which put the Army of Portugal for a time out of action. What was then the best thing to be done ? The decision was not easy, excepting in the obvious matter of severing communications between the Army of Portugal and the Army of the Centre. Could

1812. Wellington by any possibility hold Old Castile? The only chance of doing so was to weaken the Army of Portugal still further by an active pursuit, and to capture Burgos before its fortifications had been repaired and while the discouragement and demoralisation of the retreat were still potent among the enemy. But would he have attained his object even then? It seems to me extremely doubtful; for how would he have supported himself? His line of supply from his bases at Oporto and Coruña would have lain over three hundred miles of bad road, and he could hardly have opened a fresh base at Santander, with a line of communication parallel to the enemy's front. Burgos itself was no stronghold; and if the Armies of the North and Centre, joined with the best troops of the Army of Portugal, had advanced against him, the fortress would have been of little value or protection. It seems to me therefore that Wellington deliberately abandoned all hope of solid military profit from his victory, and decided to content himself with its moral advantages.

To this end he moved upon Madrid, the capture of which to some extent satisfied his aspirations. It is probable that, if he had followed up Joseph's retreat, he might have made that retreat even more miserable than it was, and possibly have ruined the Army of the Centre; but it must be remembered that the want of water would have been as distressing to the pursuers as to the pursued, and would have rendered the pursuit very costly. A march to Alicante to pick up Maitland's force and operate against Joseph and Suchet, would have involved the detachment of a strong body of troops in the north to hold the Army of Portugal in check, and was therefore out of the question. From a strictly military point of view, therefore, he gained only the capture of the garrison and of the stores in the Retiro, which was beyond question appreciable as a diminution of the resources of the enemy for future campaigns. The immediate moral and political influence of the movement was likewise not to be despised, for

Napoleon's march into Russia had so far been triumphant ; and the disaffected, who were disposed to rebel against his rule during his absence, needed encouragement. Moreover, and this was a most important point, the news that Madrid was in British hands might well cause the Americans to think better of their recent hasty declaration of war. Lastly, it was reasonable to expect that the expulsion of the Intrusive King from his capital might hearten the Spaniards of all ranks to new and enthusiastic effort. But, the Spaniards and the Spanish Government being such as they were, was it not somewhat presumptuous to count upon the continued occupation of Madrid ; and, unless that occupation could be permanent, was it not a mistake to raise false hopes by leading British troops, or at any rate the head-quarters of the British army, into Madrid at all ? Was such a course not a repetition of Napoleon's mistake in assuming that the seizure of the capital carried with it the mastery of the kingdom ?

Again to what military projects was the capture of Madrid likely to inspire the enemy's Commander-in-Chief ? It was of course impossible for the British General to divine ; but it was clear that he expected and hoped that, for the sake of Spain, it would lead to the evacuation of Andalusia either through some direct advance of his own forces upon the province or, as actually happened, by the withdrawal of Soult's entire army to Valencia. This last movement, Wellington declared, would be the fulfilment of his wishes ; yet he failed not to realise that the concentration of Soult's, Joseph's, and Suchet's armies against him must have unpleasant consequences for himself.¹ In the midst of his doubts came Clausel's raid upon his communications in the second

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To H. Wellesley, 16th Aug. 1812. He wrote later with clear insight : "I have always been of opinion that, as far as the Allied British and Portuguese army was concerned, the discontinuance of the blockade of Cadiz and the evacuation of Andalusia would be misfortunes, however important as political events." To Bathurst, 28th Oct. 1812.

1812. week of August, which gave him another opportunity for dealing a heavy blow at the Army of Portugal, so as to disable it for at least some months and drive it beyond the Ebro. After a second victory Burgos, albeit already repaired and strengthened, might have fallen in a few days, though it is still more than doubtful whether it could have been held. "Believe me," said a captured French officer, whom James Stanhope met at Salamanca on his way to Burgos, "believe me, you are too far forward, and will not winter on the Ebro." As we have seen already, Wellington, whether to bring up the Galician army or from what motive soever, pressed Clausel backward in the gentlest and most leisurely fashion, and then laying siege to Burgos was completely, almost ignominiously, foiled.

The conclusion would seem to be that Wellington was fairly bewildered by the possibilities that seemed to lie open to him after the victory of Salamanca, and that for a moment he lost his hold upon facts. His army was so weak in comparison with the united force of the enemy that its function was still rather to prevent the French from establishing their hold upon the Peninsula than to attempt to drive them from it. The more they were dispersed, the more they played into his hands; wherefore there seems to have been no great object in compelling them to evacuate Andalusia unless by a general action which would wreck the Army of the South. The longer that Soult frittered his troops away in the blockades of Cadiz and in the occupation of a district measuring at least three hundred miles by one hundred, the better for the Allies. If in spite of everything the French Commander-in-Chief decided to assemble the Armies of the Centre, East, and South-east in one body, then the only course for Wellington was to attempt to fall upon some one of them before they were united; but to this end it was essential that the Army of Portugal should be first thoroughly disabled. And, judging with the wisdom that comes after the event, it should seem that Wellington ought never to have rested after the

brilliant action of the Arapiles until Clausel had been 1812. crippled beyond all remedy. If he had followed that General up vigorously, leaving a division at Valladolid, it is doubtful whether Joseph would have ventured to advance upon that place where Santocildes and Amarante were already in position and Castaños might join them upon any day from Astorga. Or again, as has been suggested by the Spanish historian, General Arteche, if Wellington had taken up a central position, say at Aranda de Duero, Joseph could not have suffered him to remain for an indefinite time across his communications, and, not being strong enough to drive away the Allies single-handed, must have summoned to his aid one or other of the armies. Any attempt at a concerted movement with Clausel would infallibly have led to the defeat of one of the two bodies in detail ; wherefore Joseph must either have called Suchet's army to him from Valencia, leaving Maitland and O'Donnell free to work havoc in that quarter ; or he must have abandoned Madrid and betaken himself to Valencia or Andalusia. In that case the object of Wellington's march to Madrid would equally have been gained ; and, if circumstances should have compelled the ultimate dereliction of the capital again to the enemy, the departure of a guerilla-band after a few weeks of occupation would have been a very different matter from the Commander-in-Chief's humiliating retreat after a somewhat ostentatiously victorious entry.

All this, it must be repeated, is wisdom after the event ; nor is it possible for us to view the situation as it presented itself to Wellington at the time. Yet it seems certain that the advance of the main army upon Madrid was a mistake from which issued all the subsequent troubles of the campaign. Wellington had endeavoured to embrace more territory than he had the force to protect ; and we must now follow him through the consequences of his error.

CHAPTER XVIII

1812. SOULT, as we have seen, retreated from Seville by Granada upon Huescar, where D'Erlon's corps, which had followed the parallel course by Cordova and Jaen, was reunited to the Army of the South. The whole Sept. 30. then proceeded towards Almansa, and on the 30th of September came into contact with Joseph's patrols near Hellin. The King had moved his head-quarters to San Felipe; and, Soult having established his head- Oct. 2. quarters at Almansa on the 2nd of October, the junction so long desired by Joseph was finally accomplished. On the 3rd the two men met, the King not in the best of tempers, having lately intercepted a letter from Soult to Napoleon which attributed to him treacherous intentions. However, after a stormy interview the matter was smoothed over; Suchet and Jourdan were called in; and the quartette resolved themselves into a council of war. Opinions were unanimous as to the expediency of reopening communications with the Army of Portugal as speedily as possible, but divided as to the means of accomplishing this end. Soult was for attaching part of the Army of Aragon to the Armies of the Centre and South, and allowing Valencia to take its chance. Suchet on the other hand wished not only to keep the Army of Aragon intact, but to add to it a division of the Army of the Centre. Jourdan finally gained Joseph's adherence to his own suggestion that the Armies of the Centre and South should march upon Madrid, and that Suchet should be left with his force undiminished at Valencia. Soult thereupon sent his

sick, wounded, and worn-out soldiers to Valencia, and 1812. received Joseph's orders to advance, as soon as he shculd have obtained supplies from Suchet, along the great road to Aranjuez. He was also directed to transfer to the Army of the Centre, which would move parallel to him on his right flank, Barrois's division of infantry and two regiments of cavalry. The Marshal refused to comply with this command until warned that he must obey it or resign ; and he provoked Joseph not a little by delaying his march upon sundry pretexts. For one thing, he sent D'Erlon forward to capture the castle of Chinchilla, the guns of which commanded the road to Aranjuez, though they could easily be avoided by a slight deviation. The place was strong, and the little garrison of one hundred and eighty men resisted stoutly until overwhelmed by a terrible misfortune. A stroke of lightning damaged a great part of the defences, killed nine men and disabled fifty, including the Governor ; whereupon the survivors in excusable dejection surrendered on the 9th of October. Oct. 9. At length Soult set out upon his march, and Joseph started likewise ; and on the 17th of October the Army Oct. 17. of the Centre, now eighteen thousand strong under D'Erlon, was at Tarancón, while Soult lay at Ocaña, some thirty-five miles to the west. The two armies jointly numbered some sixty thousand men with eighty-four guns.¹

To cover Madrid Wellington, as we have seen, had left Hill on the Tagus between Toledo and Fuentidueña ; but he had counted also on the Spaniards under Ballesteros to hold a respectable part of Joseph's force in diversion. The Cortes, in fact, had ordered that General to move upon Alcaraz, some forty miles southwest of Albacete, where he would have lain full on the left flank of Joseph's advance, and, if threatened by a French detachment, could have taken refuge in the

¹ The numbers according to the muster-rolls of 1st Oct. 1812 were : *Army of the South*, 1816 officers, 47,209 men ; *Army of the Centre*, 646 officers, 12,030 men.

1812. Sierra de Alcaraz. It happened, however, that at this critical moment the Cortes by a decree of the 22nd of September gave Wellington supreme command of all the Spanish forces ; and the news of this appointment reached Ballesteros at Granada while following up the retreat of Soult. Vain, foolish, and intolerably egoistic, the General published a manifesto condemning such an insult to the Spanish Army, and proclaiming that, if it were swallowed by his fellow-citizens and soldiers, he would throw up his employment. This idle vapouring the Cortes soon remedied by sending a sensible man to replace the sensitive officer ; but meanwhile Ballesteros remained halted at Granada, and Hill was in no strength to resist the advance of sixty thousand men. For long Wellington held to the belief that Soult and Joseph could not venture to attack Hill on the Tagus without first securing the forts in the provinces of Murcia and Alicante. Then, under the impression that Joseph would advance with Suchet's army as well as Soult's and his own, he contemplated raising the siege and marching southward to Hill's assistance. But, as the King made no haste to start, Wellington decided to continue his efforts against Burgos, with the more confidence since the heavy rain before the fortress seemed to promise a flood which would make the Tagus impassable. On the 17th, however, Hill reported that the enemy was advancing from the south and that the fords of the river were practicable ; and it was this intelligence which caused Wellington on the 21st to order the raising of the siege.¹

In his own front also the enemy was menacing. Contrary to the British Commander's expectations, Caffarelli, ignoring the diversion of Popham on the north coast, had united eight thousand infantry, a thousand cavalry, and sixteen guns at Vitoria for the relief of Burgos ; and to this force was to be added the Army of the North, now strengthened by drafts of twelve thousand men, and

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Hill, 12th, 14th, 17th Oct. ; to Bathurst, 26th Oct. 1812.

bearing on its rolls over forty-five thousand men of all ranks. Clauseau had both reorganised it and restored its spirit and discipline ; but, much against the will of Marmont, Clauseau had been ordered to cede the command to Souham pending the return of Massena. Souham took over his new charge on the 3rd of October but, crediting Wellington with sixty thousand men, forbore to advance for a fortnight. He then deemed the relief of Burgos imperative, summoned Caffarelli's troops from Vitoria, and concentrated the Army of Portugal at Briviesca. There had been from the beginning of the siege constant skirmishing between the advanced parties of both armies about Monasterio ; and on the 13th there was a sharp dispute at the stream Oct. 13. that runs through that village. Finally on the 18th Oct. 18. the French forced back the Allied outposts and captured a picquet of Brunswickers which had been left, contrary to orders, in a village in front of Monasterio. Wellington, meanwhile, took up a strong position on a ridge with his right at Rubena ; and on the following day Souham pushed forward Maucune with two divisions of infantry and some light cavalry. These presently opened a smart fire upon the Spanish skirmishers at the foot of the hill, whereupon the Spanish line on the crest above began to discharge volleys at the range of half a mile. In the course of his movements Maucune boldly presented his flank to the Allies ; and this was more than Wellington could stand. "By God," he said, galloping up to Paget, "I never saw so impudent a thing in my life ; do move down and attack them." The First Division therefore descended the hill with the Fifth Division in support ; and the British, delighted to be quit of muddy trenches, fell on with a will. The French gave way at once ; but darkness prevented pursuit ; and the British, having forced them well back, returned to their position.

Trifling though the affair seemed at the moment, it proved to be of the greatest importance. Wellington, unaware that Caffarelli had reinforced Souham, was

1812. resolved to give battle on the next day, the anniversary of Trafalgar, though his own force did not exceed twenty-one thousand British, German, and Portuguese, and twelve thousand highly untrustworthy Spaniards. He held his ground accordingly ; but at two o'clock he received the message from Hill which announced the advance of Soult and Joseph and Sir Rowland's consequent retreat. Fortunately Souham had received on the 20th instructions from Joseph not to engage in a general action, and his army did not come into sight until

Oct. 21. sunset of the 21st, when it halted at a respectable distance.

With perfect coolness in the face of imminent peril Wellington gave orders to retire at nightfall. The First, Sixth, and Seventh Divisions, together with one division of Spaniards and two brigades of Portuguese, were directed to march through Burgos, cross the Arlanzon by the two bridges of the town, proceed by Villa de Buniel, and recross the river there by the bridge immediately below it. The Fifth Division and two more Spanish divisions were to move by Quintana Dueñas upon Villalon, and thence by Tardajos across the Urbel river. The Spanish cavalry and the remainder of the Spanish infantry were to move by a parallel route to north of the Fifth Division. Bock's cavalry was to cross the Arlanzon by the bridge of Ibeas and make for Villa de Buniel ; while Anson's light brigade was to follow in rear of all by way of Villa Toro upon Frandovinez, which last was the appointed rendezvous of the entire army.¹

¹ I have given this order at some length because of Napier's statement that Wellington had the choice of bridges at Burgos and Villalon (which he, and Lopez's map and Wellington's orders call Villaton), and that he chose that of Burgos because if he had gone by Villalon and Frandovinez, Souham going by the other and shorter route, might have forestalled him at Celada del Camino. Now there is no bridge over the Arlanzon at Villalon ; Wellington sent more than half the army by Villalon and Frandovinez ; and that half reached Frandovinez at midnight, whereas the rest which crossed at Burgos were still at Villa de Buniel, far behind them, at noon of the 22nd. Wellington evidently only wished not to mass the whole of his army upon one road. In *Supp. Desp. xiv.* 144, Villa Toro is

The wheels of the artillery that passed through 1812. the town were muffled, and the men were ordered to Oct. 21. trail their arms ; but the moon shone brightly ; and Stanhope, who knew by experience that the guns of the Castle enfiladed the bridges, could not understand how the British columns could cross them without losing half their numbers. "I do not think that they will see you," answered Wellington when Paget mentioned the matter to him ; and he was right. The First and Seventh Divisions passed over unobserved ; and it was not until some Spanish cavalry, losing their heads, traversed the bridge at a gallop, that the French opened a heavy fire. Wellington then sent round the Sixth Division, which was following in rear, along the route taken by the Fifth Division ; and the column, after several hours' rest at Villa de Buniel, resumed its march at noon unmolested to Celada del Camino, the rest of the army bivouacking a few miles further to the north at Hornillos, with the cavalry at Estepar and Villa de Buniel. Altogether this first step of a difficult retreat was accomplished with consummate skill and address.

Souham did not perceive what had happened until the evening of the 22nd, when he at once set his troops in motion to pursue. Wellington on his side marched before daylight on the 23rd, the southern column to Oct. 23. Torquemada and the northern to Cordovillas,¹ crossing the Pisuerga by the bridges at those two places ; while the rear-guard, consisting of Bull's troop of horse-artillery, Anson's and Bock's brigades of cavalry, the guerilla cavalry of Marquinez, and Halkett's two light

misprinted in the 3rd para. of the orders for Villaton. The name is correctly printed in the extract from the orders printed in *Life of Sir William Gomm*, p. 288, but the name Tardejos is misprinted Badajoz.

¹ Head-quarters were ordered first to Revilla Vallegera, a point considerably short of Pisuerga, but in the course of the march were pushed on to Cordovillas. According to Stanhope's Journal this change was due to Willoughby Gordon, the new Quartermaster-General, and was a great mistake. Wellington, according to Stanhope, intended to throw the army across the Arlanzon, apparently by the bridge of Villodrigo.

1812. battalions of the German Legion, remained in position Oct. 23. under General Cotton¹ near the Venta del Pozo, a little to west of Celada del Camino, to check the enemy for as long as possible. At nine in the morning the French cavalry came up to the rear-guard by the little river Hormaza. Cotton had made skilful dispositions. Anson's brigade² was arrayed on the enemy's side of the stream, with one battalion of Germans concealed among bushes on the bank, and the other in reserve in the village of Celada. The French attacked at once, and though twice repulsed by Anson's brigade in two successive charges, ultimately pushed the British back within range of the Germans. A sharp fire speedily made the hostile squadrons withdraw ; and Cotton having gained three hours by his resistance, and observing that the enemy had been heavily reinforced, fell back two miles and took up another position. The French, however, now appeared in force on the left, that is to say the north, of Cotton, driving the guerillas before them ; and Wellington, taking command in person, directed the Germans to retire to the defile of Villodrigo some miles in rear. By continual charges Anson enabled the German battalions to withdraw in safety ; and a few miles further on Halkett came upon Bock's brigade, a bare three hundred sabres, drawn up five hundred yards behind a canal over which the road was carried by a small bridge. Here he halted on a height in rear of his countrymen, having his right flank covered by the Arlanza ; while Bock's dragoons were posted to the right or south of the road, and Bull's guns were stationed to command the passage of the bridge.

In this position they waited until five o'clock, when Anson's brigade came over the bridge in considerable disorder. The Spanish guerillas had been driven in upon their flank, four or five squadrons of the French mingled with them ; and the foes, being indistinguishable among the friends, had caught the British at a disadvantage and

¹ Cotton had just rejoined the army from hospital at Salamanca.

² 11th, 12th, 16th L.D.

inflicted upon them considerable loss. The British 1812. dragoons rallied, however, and re-formed in rear of Oct. 23. Bock's line, though the French followed hard upon them. Cotton delayed his attack until Anson's men should align themselves on the left of the Germans; and Anson accordingly moved his squadrons to the appointed station, but in so doing passed in front of the battery and masked its fire. Before they could reach their place the French had poured over the bridge in considerable numbers, formed line with incredible rapidity, and attacked. Bull's battery on opening fire threw its shrapnel too high; and, when Bock's dragoons advanced, Anson's horses were so much beaten that they could not keep up with them. The gallant Germans charged with such vigour that they were swallowed up in the mass of the French; the British also fell on, and for some minutes there was wild cutting and thrusting until the whole were borne back, Wellington himself in their midst, by overwhelming numbers, and swept away to the rear. Exulting in their success the French whirled up the hill against Halkett's battalions, which were separated by an interval of three or four hundred yards. Turning first upon the rearmost, the French were received by the Germans in square and completely repulsed. Next they essayed to break the foremost with as little success, so deadly was the fire of the brave Hanoverians. "The riflemen brought the enemy down as if they had been partridges," wrote one who witnessed the scene;¹ and after two failures and a half-hearted attempt at a third attack, they drew off and allowed the rear-guard to make its way in peace to Torquemada.²

The loss of the British and Germans in this affair amounted to two hundred and thirty, including fifteen

¹ Stanhope's MS. Journal.

² The authorities for this combat are Beamish, Schwertfeger, and *A Dragoon of the Legion*, published by Mr. Oman in *Blackwood's Magazine*, March 1913. Unfortunately there is no narrative by any of the British Light Dragoons, Tomkinson having been on the sick list at the time. Napier appears to have obtained some information from them, but it is not very clear.

1812. officers, killed, wounded, and missing. The casualties Oct. 23. of the French are unknown, but must have been considerably higher, for their lists show no fewer than thirty-two officers killed or wounded, and Caffarelli stated in his report that every officer of the 15th Chasseurs, excepting two, was either hurt or slain. Nevertheless the spirit of the brigades of Anson and Bock was very seriously shaken; and British officers who had watched the combat were exceedingly thankful when the French relinquished the pursuit. In truth the British and Germans were sorely tried, for they were but five weak regiments, counting at most a thousand sabres, whereas the French had engaged twelve regiments certainly, and sixteen regiments probably, with a total strength of at least three thousand or at most five thousand sabres.¹ It is indeed surprising that the Allies came off no worse than they did; and Caffarelli complained that, if Boyer's division of dragoons had not ridden away northward at the supreme moment instead of supporting the attack, the cavalry of the Allies would have been destroyed.² Still there seems to have been decided mismanagement on the part either of Cotton or of Anson in handling the mounted troops in rear of the canal; and there appears also to have

¹ The returns of 1st October 1812 are as follows :

Curto's Division : 1st brigade, 3rd Hrs., 22nd, 26th, and 1 sq. 28th Chas.; 2nd brigade, *13th and *14th Chasseurs. *Total*, 115 off., 1761 men.

Boyer's Division : *6th, *11th, 15th, *25th Dragoons. 75 off., 1599 men.

Light Cav. Brigade : *1st Hussars; *31st Chasseurs. 53 off., 693 men.

Brigade from Army of North : *15th Chasseurs, 20th Dragoons, *Berg Lancers, *Gendarmes. 117 off., 1606 men.

The regiments marked * lost an officer or officers killed or wounded.

² "I twice thought that Anson's brigade (which is weak in numbers and exhausted by constant service) would have been annihilated, and I believe we owe the preservation of that and of the German heavy brigade to Halkett's two light German battalions. Anson's brigade had only 460 sabres in the field . . . the French had 1600 to 2000 swords against them. We had literally to fight our way for four miles."—T. Sydenham to H. Wellesley, 28th Oct. 1812. *Wellington Supp. Desp.*, vii. 464.

been something lamentably wrong with Bull's battery, 1812. which had been in a position to rake the bridge for Oct. 23. some hours, but never succeeded in hitting a man of nearly three thousand French who galloped across it. Altogether the episode, though not disgraceful, was anything but creditable to the Allies, saving always Halkett's two noble battalions.

On arriving at their bivouac about Torquemada the British infantry found the villages full of new-made wine ; and it is said, most probably with no exaggeration, that twelve thousand men were helplessly drunk at one moment. Here was a beginning of the indiscipline which was to show itself in a still worse form a few weeks later ; and Paget, who had witnessed similar scenes with Moore on the retreat to Coruña, warned officers and men that he should show no lenience. For this reason, and owing also to the exhausted state of his transport-animals, Wellington on the 24th made no further movement than to throw his army across the Carrion near its junction with the Pisuerga, where he took up a strong position with his right resting on the village of Dueñas and on the Pisuerga, and his left extending along a very mountainous ridge, parallel with the Carrion, to a bend of that river opposite Palencia. Here he commanded the three bridges of Palencia, Villa Muriel, and Dueñas, and therefore was able to leave the Sixth Division and a small body of cavalry on the eastern bank of the Carrion. In due time the French came down to the Pisuerga, and a part of them crossed that river by the bridge of Torquemada under a cannonade from the British artillery ; but here they stood fast, for the number of their drunkards, according to report, exceeded even that of the Allies. Wellington thereupon withdrew all his troops to the western bank of the Carrion, and ordered the bridges of Palencia, Villa Muriel, and Dueñas on that river to be destroyed, as well as that of Tariego over the Pisuerga. On this day the First battalion of the First Guards joined the army from England, having marched

1812. from Coruña, a welcome reinforcement of eleven hundred men.

Oct. 25. On the morning of the 25th Souham pushed Foy forward against Palencia, while Maucune led a strong reconnaissance towards Villa Muriel. The bridge at this latter place was blown up in the nick of time, and Souham determined to cross the Pisuerga at Tariego and force the next bridge to that of Villa Muriel at San Isidro. Unfortunately a false report had come in on the evening of the 24th that the bridge of Tariego was already in possession of the enemy, and consequently the officer entrusted with the duty of mining it did not begin his work until the morning of the 25th, when he started with an escort of fifty infantry and a squadron of cavalry. Before the mine could be completed the French cavalry came down, carried the bridge with great gallantry, and captured the party of infantry, while the squadron made off with all haste. Thus Souham had secured a passage over the Pisuerga by which he could reach Tudela on the Douro before the Allies. On Wellington's left matters went fully as ill. The gate of Palencia was barricaded and the ramparts surrounded by a regiment of Spanish cavalry, but these horsemen were speedily dispersed and the gate was blown open by the French artillery. Chemineau's brigade then rushed forward, drove back the Allies, and seized the bridge before it could be destroyed. It does not appear that more than one British battalion was at Palencia, Wellington having relied mainly upon the Spaniards of the Galician army to defend the place ; but it is certain that that battalion—with or without good reason—retreated with the loss of only sixteen killed and wounded and twenty-seven prisoners ; and it should seem from the language of the Commander-in-Chief that he expected something better of them.¹

¹ "It appears that the enemy assembled in such force at that point that Lieut.-Colonel Campbell thought it necessary to retire upon Villa Muriel, and the enemy passed the Carrion at Palencia." —Wellington to Bathurst, 26th Oct. 1812.

Both flanks of the position were now to all intents 1812. turned ; but the danger on the left was actually urgent. Oct. 25. Wellington accordingly drew back that flank *en potence* to Villa Muriel. The bridge at that place had been wrecked ; but a French soldier, pretending to be a deserter, persuaded the soldiers on the western bank to point out to him a ford ; and over this General Maucune presently pushed part of his division across the Carrion and cut off a few prisoners in the village. The Spaniards opposed to him at once gave way, though Wellington's gallant aide-de-camp, Miguel de Alava, did his best to rally them ; and Wellington thereupon ordered both brigades of the Fifth Division, now commanded by General Oswald, to make a counter attack, which after some sharp fighting retook the village, and drove Maucune again to the eastern bank. The operation cost the Allies about three hundred and fifty killed, wounded, and prisoners, the loss of the French being probably greater. However, there was no getting over the fact that both flanks of the position were turned ; and for once Wellington, haggard with fatigue and anxiety, showed visible annoyance. At nightfall the entire army except the Fifth Division quitted their ground, and before three in the morning of the 26th the whole were in Oct. 26. retreat south-eastward to Cabezon, where they recrossed the Pisuerga by a single narrow bridge and took up a position behind it. Here, so long as the river remained high, the Allies were unassailable, the bridge being commanded by formidable heights, with a village serving the purpose of a bridge-head. Wellington therefore halted, and sent the Seventh Division to secure the bridges of Simancas, Valladolid and Tordesillas so as to assure his retreat across the Douro.

Meanwhile Souham repaired the broken bridges, resumed his march on the 26th, and on the morning of the next day moved his whole army in full sight Oct. 27. of Wellington over the plain towards the bridge of Cabezon. Then realising for the first time the full strength of his enemy, Wellington saw that he

1812. could not hope permanently to hold the line either Oct. 27. of the Pisuerga or of the Douro ; and he wrote to warn Hill that his situation might become delicate. Presently a French General, probably Souham himself, approached impertinently near the river for purposes of reconnaissance, and was warned to retire by a few shrapnel shells. He answered by bringing up a French battery and firing with grape, with the result that Colonel Robe, the chief of the British artillery, was wounded, having been too proud to imitate Sir Edward Paget's staff and lie down. Shortly afterwards Souham extended the right of his army to Zaratan ; whereupon Wellington ordered the bridges of Simancas and Valladolid to be destroyed. Delay was everything to him in order to assure, if possible, a safe junction with Hill.

Oct. 28. On the 28th the French attempted to force these two bridges, but were easily repulsed by the Seventh Division at Valladolid. At Simancas, the defence of which was entrusted to Colin Halkett with his two light battalions of the Legion, the Brunswick battalion and two guns, the struggle was more severe. The French were within an ace of capturing Halkett's advanced picquet ; and at noon Foy's division appeared in strength on the heights beyond the river, and sent out a swarm of skirmishers towards the bridge. Holding them in check to the last moment, Halkett sent off the Brunswickers to the bridge of Tordesillas, and successfully sprang the mine. Foy then detached a force to Tordesillas, where the bridge had been broken in the previous June. The Brunswickers had orders to prevent the enemy from repairing it ; and for the fulfilment of this duty a wall and a tower of masonry close to the river

Oct. 29. afforded valuable facilities. On the morning of the 29th a party of the 6th French Light Infantry came down to the ruined arches ; and after a time their commander, Captain Guingret, called for volunteers to swim the river and drive away the force on the further bank. Eleven officers and forty-five men responded ; and this most gallant little band plunged into the water, which

was running high and icy cold, pushing before them 1812. their arms and cartridges on a rude raft made of a few Oct. 29. planks. Reaching the opposite bank in safety they stormed the tower, naked as they were, and the Brunswickers incontinently withdrew from the position, leaving Guingret and his brave companions in possession of the bridge and of its defences. Nothing can detract from the heroism of this handful of devoted Frenchmen ; but it must be confessed that the Brunswickers did not do their duty. This battalion was not trusted by the British, owing to the number of deserters that passed over to the enemy from its ranks ; and beyond question, if one of the Hanoverian battalions had been at Tordesillas in their stead, the event would have been very different.

Meanwhile Wellington on the evening of the 28th destroyed the bridges at Cabezon and Valladolid ; and, crossing the Douro at Tudela and Puente de Duero, on the 29th fixed his head-quarters close to the latter bridge at Boecillo. Souham's army at the same time was seen streaming away towards Tordesillas, a movement which puzzled Wellington until in the course of the night he heard that that bridge was in the enemy's hands. Without losing a moment he moved his entire army towards the threatened point, and found the repairs of the bridge nearly complete, but no great number of the enemy in the neighbourhood. Here, therefore, having broken down the bridges at Zamora and Toro, he halted, feeling with great relief that his junction with Hill was assured. On the 27th he had been doubtful whether he could hold his ground, and had warned Hill to be ready to retreat, if need were, by the valley of the Tagus ; but now it was certain that Sir Rowland could take the route by the Guadarrama and Villacastin, and join his chief on the Adaja. And to these movements of Hill from Madrid it is now necessary to turn.

On the 17th of October, as we have seen, the Armies of the South and Centre under the supreme command of Joseph Buonaparte were at Ocaña and Tarancón,

1812. moving towards the passages of the Tagus at Aranjuez and Fuentidueña. By the junction of Skerrett's detachment from Cadiz, Hill had now some forty thousand men, including Spaniards of the Regular Army. Of these the Second Division watched the passages of the Tagus between Toledo and Fuentidueña ; while the Third, Fourth, and Light Divisions, together with the Spaniards of Elio and Freyre, were in second line at Colmenar de Oreja, Valdemoro, Pinto, Arganda, and Alcala. Long's cavalry had been pushed well forward, and had come into contact with the advanced cavalry of the enemy on the 29th at Belmonte, fifty miles south-east of Aranjuez ; from which point it had fallen back slowly, finally retiring to the north of the Tagus on the

Oct. 27. morning of the 26th. On the evening of the next day Hill destroyed the bridge of Aranjuez, and threw back his left some ten or twelve miles to the rear of the Tajuna, securing at the same time the bridges of Bayona and Puente Larga, which span the Tajuna and the Jarama just above and below the junction of their waters. On the 28th D'Erlon advanced to Fuentidueña where, finding the boats of the bridge intact under the northern bank, he ordered them to be replaced in position, and was able before night to pass a brigade of infantry over the stream. On the following day Soult reached

Oct. 30. Aranjuez ; and on the 30th, the bridges there and at Fuentidueña having been re-established, the passage of the river began. Soult then made a reconnaissance in force of Hill's position on the Jarama, and attacked the brigade at Puente Larga with some vigour. Hill had intended to blow up the bridge and march northward the same morning ; but the mine had failed ; and the Forty-seventh and Ninety-fifth, of Skerrett's detachment, had a sharp fight with the enemy before the destruction of the bridge broke off the combat.¹ On

¹ Wellington reports the British casualties at 40, Napier at 60. Jourdan's despatch, founded on a report from Soult which I have been unable to find, is the authority for the statement that the destruction of the two arches of the bridge brought the fight to an

that evening Hill caused the stores in the Retiro to be ruined and began his retreat, to the abject dismay of Oct. 30. the unfortunate inhabitants of Madrid, who now saw themselves exposed to the full fury of the coming storm.¹ Soult, however, having exaggerated accounts of Hill's strength, made up his mind that Sir Rowland intended to accept battle in the very strong position of the Jarama, and was for turning it by the north at Arganda, when early in the morning of the 31st he Oct. 31. discovered that the Allies had decamped. A thick fog prevented his cavalry at first from exploring very far, but he quickly repaired the bridge and led his advanced guard as far as Valdemoro, picking up, according to his own report, three hundred British prisoners. Still he persisted in his opinion that Hill, reinforced by troops from Wellington's army and even by Wellington in person, would fight a battle for Madrid ; and in deference to his views Joseph ordered D'Erlon to Aranjuez, to follow the movements of the Army of the South.

Hill now retired steadily northward and westward, reaching the Escorial on the 1st of November, crossing Nov. 1. the pass of Guadarrama on the 2nd, and moving thence Nov. 2. by Villacastin towards Arevalo, where he received orders from Wellington to turn westward, so as to pass the Adaja at Blasco Sancho, and make for Alba de Tormes by way of Fontiveros. Part of the army had already taken the northern route, but the bulk of it wheeled off westward from San Chidrian upon Villanueva de Gomez. Wellington meanwhile remained on the south bank of the Douro, with his head-quarters at Rueda and all quiet on his front, until the 6th, when he returned southward Nov. 6. to the line of the Trabancos about Torrecilla de la

end. Soult states his losses at first at 25 and later at 31 wounded. I doubt the truth of this. The attack on the bridge was repulsed, and failure generally costs more than success.

¹ See the address of the Spanish Gentlemen to Mogh Sherer of the 34th, *Recollections of the Peninsula*, pp. 290-291 : "Why, why did you come hither, if you did not calculate on maintaining possession . . . ?"

1812. Orden, and thence on the 7th and 8th to the heights Nov. 7-8. of San Christobal on the north of Salamanca. On these last two days likewise Hill carried his army over the Tormes by the bridge of Alba ; and thus the junction between the two armies of the Allies was safely effected, though not on the Adaja as Wellington had first intended. Had he moved southward to meet Sir Rowland at Arevalo, Souham could have crossed the Douro by the repaired bridges of Toro and Tordesillas and turned his left flank. Had Hill moved northward to meet Wellington, Soult could have turned Sir Rowland's right flank by way of Fontiveros. But by converging gradually at an acute angle, instead of abruptly at a right angle, both armies were assembled behind the Tormes ; and Wellington, to repeat his own phrase, "got clear in a handsome manner from the worst scrape that he ever was in."

Meanwhile the Army of the South pushed on towards Madrid, Soult's advanced guard reaching that city on the 1st of November, the Escorial on the 2nd, and Nov. 4. Villacastin on the 4th. On the following day the Nov. 5. Marshal caught sight of Hill's retreating columns, and led the advanced guard along the western route, while the main body followed that of Arevalo, where it arrived together with Joseph himself on the 6th.¹ In the course Nov. 7. of the 7th the King's flanking parties met Souham's advanced cavalry at Medina del Campo ; and by the Nov. 9. evening of the 9th three divisions at least of the Army of Portugal had crossed the Douro. On the morning Nov. 10. of the 10th Soult came up before Alba de Tormes, placed eighteen guns in battery and fired heavily until evening, at the same time moving up his light troops close to a wall which formed part of the exterior defences. He accomplished, however, no greater result than killing and wounding one hundred and

¹ Napier says that Joseph hoped to cut off Hill from Wellington. This cannot be correct, for Soult had noticed that the bulk of Hill's army had turned west ; and Jourdan says that Joseph's object was to join hands the sooner with Souham.

thirteen men of Howard's brigade, which was charged 1812. with the defence. The loss of the French can hardly have been less, for they counted eight officers killed and wounded. In the evening the whole force of the enemy closed in upon the British position ; the Army of Portugal at Villaruela, Babila Fuente, and Huerta, that of the South between Peñeranda and Alba de Tormes, and that of the Centre (less a garrison left at Madrid) in rear of the last-named at Macotera. By this time Caffarelli's troops of the Army of the North had returned to Burgos, and garrisons had been posted not only at Madrid, but in Toro, Tordesillas, Zamora, and Valladolid. It is therefore probable that Joseph's united force did not exceed ninety thousand men, eleven thousand of them cavalry, with at least one hundred and twenty guns.¹ Wellington's army may be reckoned at fifty-two thousand British and Portuguese and sixteen thousand Spaniards, the whole including thirty-five hundred cavalry, with one hundred and eight guns. Its front ran from San Christobal on the north through Aldea Lengua and thence across the Tormes to Alba. This, the right of the position, was held by the Second Division, with the Third and Fourth Divisions in second line at Calvarrasa de Arriba ; the Light and Seventh Divisions and Spaniards were in and about Salamanca ; the First in advance of it ; and the Fifth and Sixth in the position of San Christobal.

The troops were regaining their good humour at the prospect of a fight ; but Hill's army as well as Wellington's had made free with the wine-vaults during their retreat and behaved very badly, leaving, according to Soult's account, seven hundred prisoners in the enemy's hands.² Wellington now recognised,

¹ Jourdan (*Mém.* p. 441) gives the strength of the joint armies at 80,000 with 10,000 cavalry. The states of 1st Oct. 1812 show the strength of the Armies of Portugal, South, and Centre at 105,311 of all ranks, with 13,519 cavalry. Jourdan reckons the guns at 120 ; they were probably more nearly 200.

² D'Espinchal gives glowing accounts of the capture of a convoy on the 3rd of November, when two British battalions laid down

1812, though he did not in so many words admit, that Nov. their indiscipline was due in some measure to over-work. "They have been in the field," he wrote, "and almost constantly marching since the month of January last ; their clothes and equipment are much worn, and a short period in cantonments would be useful to them." Unfortunately this was not the only evil. Whether through inexperience, or possibly through the neglect of the Quartermaster-general, Commissary Bissett had omitted to empty the magazines on the line of advance from Lisbon to Madrid and thence to Burgos when the army retreated, and to fill those on the line from Lisbon to Salamanca. When therefore Commissary-general Kennedy returned to the army just before the siege of Burgos was raised, he found himself saddled with the formidable duty of removing supplies from one route and bringing them forward on the other ; while at the same time Wellington required of him the evacuation of all sick, wounded, and other encumbrances from Salamanca. Kennedy manfully wrestled with the task, but failed owing to the misconduct of the officers and men of the convoys, who behaved so badly on the march that they drove the Spanish muleteers and waggoneers by hundreds to desertion. For a time the whole service of transport and supply seems to have been wrecked by this mishap ; which was another reason why Wellington would have been glad to canton his troops.¹

A still more serious matter afflicted the Commander-in-Chief at this time. Information, which could only have been furnished by one who had seen Wellington's most confidential despatches, had been printed by the

their arms without firing a shot. He adds that he was obliged to raise a false alarm to prevent his men from dispersing to plunder ; and also that on the 5th his regiment took another convoy, 185 prisoners, and a gun. He is a great liar ; but beyond doubt the French cavalry made some large captures.

¹ I know of no authority for this matter of the transport and supply but Napier ; but he would hardly have recorded it without knowledge.

English newspapers which supported the Opposition in 1812. Parliament ; and neither Wellington nor Lord Bathurst Nov. could trace the leakage to any one else but the new Quartermaster-general, Colonel Willoughby Gordon, who was known to have promised to write regular accounts of affairs in the Peninsula to Lord Grey. Bathurst had apprehended that much mischief would arise from Gordon's appointment ; and, as his protests were disregarded, the inference is that the choice of this officer was due to some job on the part of the Prince Regent, using the Duke of York as his instrument, at the instigation of some ignoble politician. Gordon was ambitious, for he declared that unless he were head of the Staff he would return home ; and it is certain that the Horse Guards at this time was prepared to discuss, though with no great favour, the idea of appointing a Chief of the Staff. Yet this pushing and arrogant officer, though efficient at the Horse Guards, was singularly incapable in the field. "He will not remain long with the army," wrote Tomkinson in his Journal, after experience of one of Gordon's mistakes. Stanhope records that before Burgos Gordon tried to show Sir Edward Paget the position of the covering army, but could not find it ; that on the retreat he sent Ponsonby's brigade of cavalry by a mountain road, where it was useless, so that it was not at hand for the combat of Venta de Pozo ; that on the same day he blundered so grossly in assigning the halting places of the infantry that Stanhope took it upon himself to halt the First and Sixth Divisions ; and finally that, when Wellington was at Rueda, Gordon seemed to aim at "trying how many people he could employ on the same errand." Wellington hinted contemptuously that Gordon would be no great loss to the army if he were recalled, and meanwhile declared his determination to keep him at as great a distance as possible, which was doubtless wise. In such circumstances it is not surprising that Wellington expressed a preference for cantonments on the Tormes, if it were possible to obtain

1812. them, though he did not overlook the probability that he might be compelled to fall back to the Agueda.¹

Nov. 11. On the 11th Joseph, accompanied by Soult, Souham, and a multitude of other generals, advanced to the Tormes to reconnoitre the Allied position. Soult had already twice strongly expressed his opinion that a frontal attack would only throw men away to no purpose,² and had urged that Wellington's right should be turned by the fords of the upper Tormes, so as to force him to fight on ground of his enemy's choosing instead of his own. Jourdan on the other hand was for crossing the Tormes between Huerta and Villagonzalo, where the river was almost everywhere fordable, pushing forward all the cavalry and artillery to cover the passage of the infantry, and so piercing the centre of Wellington's line at Calvarrasa de Arriba. The whole of the generals present agreed to this plan (if we are to believe Jourdan), including Soult himself, who, however, begged that the King would await a report as to the fords on the upper waters before coming to a decision. The report came in during the night, and showed the existence of three good fords about Ejeme, a few miles above Alba ; whereupon Soult, pointing out the danger of a deployment of infantry under fire in a position which Wellington knew by heart, for the third time repeated his original opinion. Clausel, who was familiar with the country, supported him ; and Jourdan, after faintly protesting that Soult's method would make Wellington retreat, but could not force him to fight, was fain to give way. It is probable that Jourdan was wrong to submit, for there was little profit in denuding half Spain of French troops and concentrating an overwhelming host in the north-west unless the opportunity for a decisive action were not

¹ The letters respecting Colonel Gordon will be found in *Supp. Desp.* vii. pp. 427, 456, 465. The name is left blank, but only one person's can fill it.

² "Je persiste dans l'opinion qu'étant disposés à livrer bataille nous ne devons pas attaquer Alba de vive force." Soult to Joseph, 11th Nov. 1812, 8 a.m.—*Arch. de la Guerre*. The first expression must have been verbal, for I cannot find it among Soult's letters.

merely accepted but welcomed. Soult, however, was 1812. evidently afraid of Wellington; and, since the greater Nov. 11. number of the troops were under his command, Joseph hesitated to overbear him. Having yielded so far to the Duke of Dalmatia, the King wisely added the Army of the Centre to his command, so as to afford him every facility for executing the chosen design, and placed D'Erlon at the head of the Army of Portugal.

The 12th and 13th were occupied by the French in Nov. 12- preparing the means for passing the river, and in col- 13. lecting their forces under cover of the woods in position for the coming movement, the Army of Portugal over against Alba, and the Armies of the Centre and South about La Anaya de Alba, some six miles further to the south. At seven on the morning of the 14th Soult's Nov. 14. troops traversed the Tormes in three columns. The right-hand or most northerly column crossed by the ford of Ejeme about three miles south of Alba, Pierre Soult's division of light cavalry leading the way, followed by the 3rd and 4th divisions and one brigade of the 5th division of infantry.¹ The second column, which took the next ford to the south, consisted of Tilly's division of dragoons and the 2nd, 6th, and Darmagnac's divisions of infantry; and the third or most southerly column was composed of Digeon's division of dragoons, with the 1st and Palombini's divisions of infantry, and Rémond's brigade of the 5th division. Treilhard's division of dragoons, which formed the reserve of cavalry, crossed by the ford of Ejeme; and Soult kept the Napoleon Dragoons and two more choice corps of cavalry for his escort. Rumours of some such movement had caused Wellington to send out a staff-officer² along the course of the Upper Tormes on the 12th; but neither on that day nor on the 13th was anything

¹ Pécheux's brigade. It is shown as part of the 3rd division in the returns of 10th Oct. 1812; but Soult enumerates it as distinct from that division, so I conclude that Pécheux had taken over the command of the 2nd brigade of the 5th division.

² Leith Hay. *Narrative*, pp. 290-291.

1812. to be seen. On the morning of the 14th the same staff-officer was sent to some high ground to watch the line of the river, when he at once perceived the French passage of the water, which was going forward very slowly, the infantry moving in single file over twelve bridges, and the cavalry and artillery using the fords. Having orders to send in hourly reports, he can have lost no time in communicating his discovery to Wellington. Nevertheless Soult continued to pour his troops over the stream unopposed ; and, beyond a handful of men who were made prisoners on the bank at the very outset, he encountered not a single soldier of the Allies until he reached the heights of Mozarbes, from six to seven miles south of Salamanca and the same distance west of Alba de Tormes. Early in the afternoon he had massed his force in deep columns near Mozarbes, and begun to throw up entrenchments, having observed sundry columns of the Allies in motion, though no sign of anything like an offensive movement.

In truth Wellington for some reason had been slow to take up Soult's challenge. It is said that he refused to believe the first reports that the French had crossed the Tormes, which seems hardly credible in the face of his precautions on the 12th ;¹ but be that as it may, it is certain that, considering the danger of the moment, his measures were belated. Leaving the Fourth Division and Hamilton's Portuguese before Alba, and placing the Third Division in reserve at Arapiles, he marched with the Second Division and all the cavalry that he could collect to fall upon the head of Soult's column. Soult, who was already completely in position at Mozarbes, at about three o'clock sent forward Soult's, Tilly's, and Treilhard's cavalry divisions to reconnoitre the country

¹ Stanhope, who was attached to the First Division just outside Salamanca, and constantly in touch with Wellington, says in his Journal : "On the 13th the French showed an inclination to cross at Alba. The 1st, 5th, and 6th divisions came in to Salamanca." Leith Hay also speaks of the intention to cross as well known, and states by implication that no troops but two Portuguese brigades were left on the right bank of the Tormes.

between Mozarbes and the Arapiles ; and it was in face 1812. of this force that Wellington deployed his own, opening Nov. 14. fire from two batteries upon the French squadrons and reconnoitring under cover of the cannonade. Soult made no reply to the British guns, though not a few of his men and horses were knocked over, and did not attempt to engage his adversary so late in the day, the ground being very wet and the British posted very strongly ; but Wellington soon satisfied himself that the entire Army of the South was before him, too numerous and too strongly posted for him to dream of attacking, and that his position on the Tormes had been successfully turned. Moreover, though he knew it not, the Army of Portugal had already crossed the Tormes with ease at a ford above Alba, and had bivouacked on the ridge of Nostra Señora de Utiera.

In the course of the night Wellington brought the whole of his army over to the left bank of the Tormes, blowing up the bridge of Alba and leaving three hundred Spaniards in the castle to prevent the French from repairing it. By daylight the entire host was arrayed in order of battle on the familiar ground of the Arapiles, the First Division forming the extreme right at Aldea Tejada, and the Second lining the base of the Arapiles. During the dark hours a frightful storm of wind and rain had arisen, and was still raging in full force on the morning of the 15th. Wellington wrote afterwards that, if this Nov. 15. rain had fallen twenty-four hours earlier, he could have held his winter cantonments on the Tormes ;¹ but, though it came too late to save his retreat, it was timely enough to take the sting out of the French advance. All reconnaissance was impossible before eight o'clock, but by nine the French staff had discerned the position of Wellington's troops, and Soult was free to attack if he would, though the soil was so heavy underfoot that his movements could not but be slow. He did not budge, however, until the afternoon, when he slowly pushed some of his cavalry a short distance to westward, as if

¹ *Wellington Desp.* To Dumouriez, 30th Nov. 1812.

1812. to threaten the retreat of the Allies ; and at about two Nov. 15. o'clock Wellington, who had been reconnoitring far to the front, galloped back to the heights, told Hill that there was no prospect of the enemy's delivering battle, and gave the order for retreat to the Valmusa.

The baggage and other encumbrances were set in motion from Salamanca, from which the sick had already been evacuated. Still Soult remained inactive. Joseph, riding up to Foy about this time, asked him if he thought the Allies were retreating and whether the French were anxious for a fight. Foy answered strongly in the affirmative. "Then," said Jourdan, "the army must wheel to the left, pivoting on its left, and bring the right wing of the Army of Portugal into Salamanca." Foy could hardly contain himself. He wished the army to pursue on the southern road by Tamames and El Tenebron, so as to arrive before the Allies at Santi Spiritus. Jourdan himself blamed Soult for not inclining to his left and cutting into Wellington's line of march. Soult declared that the first sign of his enemy's retreat was the sound of explosions at Salamanca, signifying the destruction of stores, and the sight of twenty-five or thirty thousand redcoats in mass, supported by the whole of the British cavalry. The moment, he admitted, was favourable for attack, but the Allies showed no disposition to accept battle, retiring rather in a succession of masses from height to height till they gained the road. It must be allowed that the weather was frightful, the rain falling in torrents, the atmosphere so thick that it was impossible to see at any distance, and the ground so deep as to make it difficult for troops to move. Yet the French had enormous superiority in cavalry, and the rain would have made the fire of infantry impossible, so that Soult had everything to hope from a vigorous onset. But he shrank from bold action in the presence of Wellington, and permitted him to draw off the British army almost within range of the French guns.

Meanwhile the Allies passed away to westward in

three columns, with the Light Division forming the 1812. rear-guard, crossed the Valmusa at different points, and Nov. 15. bivouacked for a miserable night of wet and cold in the woods on the southern bank. The British were already sulky and savage over the substitution of a dreary march for the fight which they had expected ; and their tempers were not improved by being drenched to the skin, hardly able to light a fire owing to the rain, and unprovided with victuals. Large herds of swine belonging to the peasants were wandering in the woods, and upon them the men wreaked their ill-feeling, as much from mischief as from hunger ; firing so heavily that Wellington thought that the enemy had made an attack, and so recklessly that two British dragoons were wounded. Certain of the rear-guard pillaged some Spanish provision-waggons, in defiance of the bullets of the Spanish escort, and satisfied their appetite in that way.¹ Wellington hanged two of the swine-slayers ; but to no purpose. The men, utterly out of hand, wandered in all directions in search of food, refusing to remain with their regiments ; while the officers were well content to share with the better-conducted of them a wretched meal of acorns. On the following day Nov. 16. the retreat was continued through forests of ilex along roads knee-deep in mud, and through torrents of rain. The same scenes were repeated. Happily the enemy did not press hard upon the columns, being content to secure the stragglers, who were numbered by hundreds. On the evening of the 16th the French cavalry drove in two squadrons of German Hussars with some loss, but were stopped by a steady fire of infantry and two rounds of grape, and were finally repulsed by the British dragoons, not without suffering several casualties.² On the morning of the 17th the French horsemen came on in Nov. 17. great force, and the Light Division was for a short time

¹ Costello.

² D'Espinchal gives the loss of his brigade at 37 killed and wounded. Two other brigades were engaged by his account, and the French evidently came off second best.

1812. seriously threatened ; but the assailants were checked Nov. 17. without much difficulty and effected nothing more than the capture of the baggage of the Seventh Division, the forest having enabled them to ride on the flank of the British line of march unperceived. The progress of the British columns was most disorderly ; and incidentally there was opened between the Fifth and Seventh Divisions a wide gap, which was completely uncovered. The enemy being near at hand, General Paget rode down to correct this error, but taking with him no greater escort than his Spanish orderly, was surprised and captured by three men of the 10th Chasseurs. The loss of this excellent officer was a severe one both to Wellington and to the army.¹ However, the main body continued its retreat without grave mishap, passed the Huelva, and took up a position behind it from Tamames through San Muños to Boadilla.

The Light Division was still on the east side of the river when the French cavalry was seen in the woods coming up from the south ; and on emerging upon open ground the battalions were met by the fire of French guns on their left flank. A mounted officer of the Forty-third galloped up to give the alarm. Two companies were at once extended on the menaced flank ; but the French horse, supported by infantry, drove them in, together with two of Ross's guns ; and then either Charles Alten, who was in charge of the division, or the commanding officers gave the word for the battalions to form square, with the result that for a short time there was dangerous confusion. Wellington, however, quickly restored order, and directed the division to double down to the fords, leaving four

¹ D'Espinchal takes credit to himself for this capture, and to give colour to his story calls Paget by the christian name of Arthur, whereas it was really Edward, and makes him tell a pathetic story of being "under Soult's star," having lost an arm at Logroño (really in Oporto) in 1809. Dozens of French officers, first and last, claimed to have received Paget's sword. I follow Paget's own account.—*Letters and Memorials of Gen. the Hon. Sir Edward Paget*, p. 127.

companies of the Forty-third and one of the Rifles to 1812. cover the withdrawal. Thirty French guns played upon Nov. 17. them heavily from both flanks during the movement, but caused no very great loss ; and in due time the five last companies likewise rushed down to the fords, and formed on the opposite bank, where the rest of the division was already deployed to defend the passage, with the Seventh Division in close column in its rear. Soult likewise deployed a long line of infantry ; and one battalion of Swiss in red coats actually crossed the water, being mistaken for British, but were soon driven back. Soult continued the cannonade until nightfall, but with trifling effect, both shot and shell being swallowed up by the saturated clay. According to his own account he contemplated an attack with the bayonet and a charge of cavalry, but did not venture upon it owing to the threatening appearance of the Allies, for the British guns were not idle during the combat. In the end he called off his troops after a feeble demonstration and decided to withdraw next day to Tamames, leaving only his light cavalry to continue the pursuit. He stated his loss at one hundred men, which may safely be taken as false, though it was certainly less than that of the Allies. This, however, did not amount to three hundred men.¹

It was fortunate that Soult showed himself thus unenterprising, for on the 18th he lost a great chance. Nov. 18. The egresses from the position of the Huelva being

¹ As regards the French casualties D'Espinchal mentions that one small body of 200 Hussars and Lancers alone lost 39 men. That the British casualties were not severe is plain from the returns of the 43rd, who lost but 39 of all ranks, more than half of them missing. Napier blames Dalhousie, probably with perfect justice, for keeping the Seventh Division massed in close column under the fire of the French guns, when there was shelter for it close by ; but the division does not appear to have suffered much, e.g. Halkett's two light battalions of the Legion lost only 10 men between them ; and Green of the 68th says nothing of the action. The account of the combat is taken from the narratives given by Napier, Levinge's *Hist. of the 43rd* ; Moorsom's *Hist. of the 52nd* ; Kincaid and Simmons.

1812. difficult, Wellington had given orders to continue the Nov. 18. retreat before daylight in three columns, assigning to the Spaniards a road on which was the only bridge across a flooded stream, and more circuitous routes, crossing the water by fords, to the British. Thereupon Generals Clinton, Stewart, and Dalhousie, after due consultation with each other, decided that the Commander-in-Chief was unfit for his place, and, without a word to him, agreed to lead their troops also to the bridge. Wellington himself took up a position at two o'clock to watch the troops pass by. Cavalry came, but no infantry ; nor could any one say what had become of them. Presently Wellington, suspecting what had happened, galloped off to the bridge, and there he found the three divisions hopelessly blocked, and the Light Division chafing impatiently in their position of the previous night. He is reported to have uttered a single contemptuous phrase, but, as he told Fitzroy Somerset, "By God, it was too serious to say anything." There was nothing for it but to move the army forward along the route chosen by the three mutinous generals, which took an enormous time and made the march doubly exhausting. One flooded stream could only be passed in single file upon a fallen tree, and for ten miles or more the whole country was knee-deep in water.¹ Happily Pierre Soult's light cavalry followed up the column with great timidity and were easily kept at bay by the British Ninth and Thirteenth Light

¹ I have accepted the story as told by Greville from Fitzroy Somerset's mouth (*Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria*, i. 136-137) as preferable to Napier's. Leach (*Rough Sketches*, p. 295) mentions that several divisions were floundering through a muddy defile in rear of the Light Division ; and Barrett (*Hist. of 13th Hussars*, p. 197) gives the route of the 13th, which was in the rear-guard, as Cabrillas, Aldea Alba (? Alba de Yeltes) and Bocacara to Santis-Spiritus, which is not a very devious line considering the number of streams to be traversed. The Light Division could only have heard vaguely what was going forward, so Napier may well have been misinformed as to the details. Possibly the fallen tree was the bridge by which the Spaniards, and only the Spaniards, had been intended to pass.

Dragoons. Finally on the 19th the rear-guard struggled 1812. into Ciudad Rodrigo in the last stage of exhaustion. Nov. 19. Some of the leading divisions had received rations two days before, but no food had reached the Light Division; and, when at last bags of biscuit were sent out to them, nothing but the presence of sentries with fixed bayonets could compel the starving men to await the regular distribution of victuals.¹

So ended the retreat from Burgos, which, though greatly admired by the Spanish historian, Arteche, is not one of the most creditable episodes in the history of the British Army. Wellington, as is well known, wrote to his Generals, a week after all was over, a circular letter criticising in no gentle terms the misconduct and indiscipline of the troops, which he ascribed principally to the neglect of the regimental officers. The letter though confidential was not marked so, and, being published by some of the Generals in orders, presently found its way into the English newspapers, when it raised a storm of indignation in the Army. Even James Stanhope, a most faithful disciple of Wellington, described it in his Journal as harsh and unjust; and, in so far as it denied that the Army had suffered extraordinary privations and comprehended every corps in one sweeping damnatory sentence, undoubtedly it was so. It is beyond dispute that every man was left without rations for two days,² and the great majority for three or even more; but it seems that Wellington was not aware of this failure on the part of the Commissariat, and made no allowance for it. Moreover, the Commissaries were not the only persons who deserved blame; for all authorities agree that the arrangements made by the Staff were exceedingly bad, and that there were long

¹ Leach's *Rough Sketches*, p. 296.

² The foremost troops certainly received rations long before the rear-guard. Green of the 68th (7th Division) says that his regiment received a ration of rum (with no very happy results) at midnight of the 16th, and both biscuit and rum on the 17th; and the 7th Division was not the foremost in the retreat.

1812. unnecessary halts which wore out both the strength and Nov. patience of the men. It was certainly unfortunate that so incompetent a man as Gordon should have been Quartermaster-general at this most critical time, for his blunders tended to beget insubordination among the officers as well as discontent among the rank and file. Lastly Wellington, though he shrank from no exposure or fatigue for himself, seems to have made too light of the sufferings of his troops under the incessant rain which for three long miserable days fairly washed all spirit out of the men.

Yet when all is said and done, there is hardly a critic of Wellington's letter who does not admit that his censure was in the case of some regiments thoroughly well deserved, and that, though the Staff and some of the general officers merited blame quite as much as the regimental officers, the latter were in many cases disgracefully negligent. Wellington compared very unfavourably the slowness of the British soldier in the matter of cooking with the brisk helpfulness of the French. Tomkinson of the Sixteenth Light Dragoons observed upon this that the French were allowed to despoil villages for fuel, which was forbidden to the English. But other writers¹ point out that frequently when the rations had been served out, the camp-kettles were not at hand, being carried by mules and therefore with the transport-columns. And why were these kettles carried by mules? Because they were of iron; and they were of iron because, owing to the indifference of the officers in such matters, the great majority of the battalions were not to be trusted with tin pots, which could have been carried by the men as was the case in the French Army.² Another failing in the British soldier, of which Wellington complained greatly—namely his readiness to throw away ammunition in order to be quit of the weight—has never been cured to this day, so cannot be charged upon the regimental officers.

¹ e.g. Grattan. *Adventures in the Connaught Rangers*, ii. 134.

² See Vol. VII. of this History, p. 425.

Of course the irregularity, not to say the stoppage, in the 1812. issue of rations can be alleged in excuse of the mis-
conduct of all ranks ; for it may be laid down as an axiom that, if an army is starving, its dissolution as a disciplined body is only a question of time. But, even if victuals had been punctually supplied on every day during the retreat from Burgos, it may well be doubted, arguing from the precedent of Moore's retreat to Coruña, whether the behaviour of the army would have been very different. Officers and men were thoroughly ill-tempered. They had been moving forward for months with high success, when suddenly, after they had already grown somewhat sick of marching in any direction, they were ordered to march back ; and in their dudgeon they would not try to do anything aright. To make matters worse, wine-vaults were always close at hand to enable the soldiers to saturate themselves. It is probable that no army of that time in Europe would have emerged from the like ordeal without serious injury to its discipline ; but this does not alter the unpleasant fact that the British Army stood this supreme test remarkably ill ; and that, though Wellington had foreseen that his troops would go the way of Moore's if subjected to a similar trial, he found himself powerless to avert the catastrophe. But it must be remembered that it was the House of Commons, and no military authority, which had wantonly thrown out of gear the entire disciplinary machinery of the Army.

With the return to Ciudad Rodrigo the campaign of 1812 came to an end, on the whole with a very decided balance of advantage to the Allies. It was reckoned that the retreat alone cost them nine thousand men, Spaniards included, in killed, wounded, and missing ; but, on the other hand, Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz, and other minor strongholds had been taken ; the whole of Spain south of the Tagus had been cleared of the enemy ; and twenty thousand French prisoners had been sent to England. There were Frenchmen who

1812. flattered themselves that they had avenged the defeat of Salamanca : the clear-sighted and straightforward Foy was not one of them. "Lord Wellington has retired unconquered," he wrote, "with the glory of the laurels of Arapiles, having restored to the Spaniards the country south of the Tagus, and made us destroy our magazines, our fortifications—in a word all that we have gained by our conquest, and all that could assure the maintenance of it." Foy wrote in deep bitterness of spirit ; and beyond doubt he was fully justified. Joseph had shown himself incompetent as a general in the field ; and in a review which he held at Salamanca on the 17th of November he proved that he was as strange to the methods of commanding himself to the troops as he was inefficient in the great operations of war. The French army, in fact, was as sulky as the British, because it had been baulked of a fight, and Jourdan perceived and dreaded the fact.¹ Yet the responsibility for the escape of Wellington unscathed lay less with Joseph and Jourdan than with Soult, who still held more or less independent command of the greater part of the army. Joseph attributed the feebleness of the Duke of Dalmatia in some degree to the incompetence of his brother, Pierre Soult, and to his consequent unwillingness to allow that officer's division of light cavalry to act unless supported by the bulk of the army. It is difficult to say what measure of truth may lie in this statement ; but the circumspection of Soult, the Marshal, was certainly excessive. No doubt he had learned to dread his enemy, and had no wish to share the fate of Marmont ; but during his long enjoyment of unfettered authority in Andalusia he had learned also to regard himself as a kind of sovereign. Joseph's orders had deprived him of his kingdom, and reduced him once more to a mere soldier of subordinate rank ; and this he could not forgive. From sheer ill-temper he would make no effort ; and thus the miserable vacillation exhibited in the plains of the Arapiles is ascribable ultimately to

¹ Girod de l'Ain. *Vie Militaire du Général Foy*, pp. 192-193.

Napoleon's false policy in appointing no supreme commander to the Army in Spain for three full years. Indeed, let the worshippers of the great Emperor say what they will, there is among the manifold blunders that ruined the French cause in the Peninsula not one that may not be traced directly to the orders of the Emperor himself.

Authorities.—For the operations of October and November 1812 there are on the English side, the Hill MSS. in the British Museum; the Wellington MSS. at Apsley House; Colonel Stanhope's MS. Journal; with the *Wellington Despatches*; Jones's *Sieges of the Peninsula*; and various minor works by regimental officers already quoted in the course of the narrative. On the French side there is a very full series of the letters of Joseph, Jourdan, Soult, Suchet, and Caffarelli in the *Archives de la Guerre* at Paris; those of Soult consisting of an almost daily series during the month of November. Supplementary to these are the letters given in Ducasse's *Mémoires du Roi Joseph*; Girod de l'Ain's *Vie Milit. du Général Foy*; and in the *Mémoires de Jourdan*. There are other details in the intercepted letters printed in Wellington's *Despatches*, and in the *Mémoires* of Espinchal, and *Campagnes du Capitaine Marcel*. But these two last writers are shameless liars.

APPENDIX I

WELLINGTON'S ARMY AT SALAMANCA: COMPOSITION AND STRENGTH

N.B.—Strength according to the morning state of July 15, 1812. The fighting strength on July 22, owing to losses at Castrejon and Castrillo, and to weary men falling out during the retreat, may have been perhaps 1000 less. [From Oman's *Peninsular War*, v. 595 sq.]

I. BRITISH TROOPS

CAVALRY (Stapleton Cotton).	Officers.	Strength.		
		Men.	Total.	
Le Mar-	3rd Dragoons . .	17	322	339
chant's	4th Dragoons . .	22	336	358
Brigade	5th Dragoon Guards .	22	313	325
G. Anson's	11th Light Dragoons .	30	361	391
Brigade	12th Light Dragoons .	19	321	340
	16th Light Dragoons .	14	259	273
V. Alten's	14th Light Dragoons .	23	324	347
Brigade	1st Hussars K.G.L. .	23	376	399
Bock's	1st Dragoons K.G.L. .	25	339	364
Brigade	2nd Dragoons K.G.L. .	23	384	407
		—	—	—
	Total British Cavalry . .	218	3335	3543

INFANTRY.

First Division (H. Campbell).

Fermor's	1st Coldstream Guards .	26	928	954
Brigade	1st Third Guards .	23	938	961
	I Company 5/60th Foot .	1	56	57
	2/24th Foot . .	23	398	421
Wheatley's	1/42nd Foot . .	40	1039	1079
Brigade	2/58th Foot ¹ . .	31	369	400
	1/79th Foot . .	40	634	674
	I Company 5/60th . .	1	53	54

¹ The 2/58th, though properly belonging to the Fifth Division, appears to have acted on this day with the First Division.

					Strength.	
					Officers.	Men.
Löwe's Brigade	1st Line	Battalion				
	K.G.L.	.	.	26	615	641
	2nd Line	Battalion				
	K.G.L.	.	.	26	601	627
5th Line	Battalion					
	K.G.L.	.	.	30	525	555
Total First Division		.	.	267	6156	6423

Third Division (Pakenham).

Wallace's Brigade	1/45th Foot	.	.	26	416	442
	74th Foot	.	.	23	420	443
	1/88th Foot	.	.	21	642	663
	3 Companies 5/60th Foot			11	243	254
J. Camp- bell's Brigade	1/5th Foot	.	.	32	870	902
	2/5th Foot	.	.	19	289	308
	2/83rd Foot	.	.	24	295	319
	94th Foot	.	.	24	323	347
Total Third Division		.	.	180	3498	3678

Fourth Division (Lowry Cole).

W. Anson's Brigade	3/27th Foot	.	.	19	614	633
	1/40th Foot	.	.	24	558	582
	1 Company 5/60th	.		2	44	46
Ellis's Brigade	1/7th Foot	.	.	24	471	495
	1/23rd Foot	.	.	19	427	446
	1/48th Foot	.	.	22	404	426
	1 Company Brunswick Oels	.	.	1	53	54
Total Fourth Division		.	.	111	2571	2682

Fifth Division (Leith).

Greville's Brigade	3/1st Foot	.	.	32	729	761
	1/9th Foot	.	.	31	635	666
	1/38th Foot ¹	.	.	36	764	800
	2/38th Foot	.	.	20	281	301
1 Company Brunswick Oels	.	.	.	2	76	78

¹ This battalion only joined the division on the battle-morning.

			Officers.	Men.	Strength.
					Total.
Pringle's Brigade	1/4th Foot . . .		36	421	457
	2/4th Foot . . .		27	627	654
	2/30th Foot . . .		20	329	349
	2/44th Foot . . .		20	231	251
	1 Company Brunswick Oels . . .		3	66	69
Total Fifth Division . . .			227	4159	4386

Sixth Division (Clinton).

Hulse's Brigade	1/11th Foot . . .		31	485	516
	2/53rd Foot . . .		25	316	341
	1/61st Foot . . .		29	517	546
	1 Company 5/60th . . .		2	59	61
Hinde's Brigade	2nd Foot . . .		27	381	408
	1/32nd Foot . . .		33	576	609
	1/36th Foot . . .		29	400	429
Total Sixth Division . . .			176	2734	2910

Seventh Division (Hope).

Halkett's Brigade	1st Light Batt. K.G.L. . .		25	544	569
	2nd Light Batt. K.G.L. . .		21	473	494
	Brunswick Oels (9 Companies) . . .		23	573	596
De Berne- witz's Brigade	51st Foot . . .		27	280	307
	68th Foot . . .		21	317	338
	Chasseurs Britanniques . . .		27	686	713
Total Seventh Division . . .			144	2873	3017

Light Division (Chas. Alten).

Barnard's Brigade	1/43rd Foot . . .		30	718	748
	Detachments 2/95th and 3/95th Rifles . . .		19	373	392
Vandeleur's Brigade	1/52nd Foot . . .		28	771	799
	8 Companies 1/95th . . .		27	515	542
Total Light Division . . .			104	2377	2481

		Officers.	Men.	Strength.
				Total.
Royal Horse Artillery (troops of Ross, Macdonald, and Bull, and drivers)		18	403	421
Field Artillery (companies of Lawson, Gardiner, Greene, Douglas, May, and drivers)		35	650	685
King's German Legion Artillery (battery of Sympher)		5	75	80
Artillery Total		58	1128	1186
ENGINEERS		12	9	21
STAFF CORPS		5	81	86
WAGON TRAIN		24	115	139

BRITISH TOTAL

Infantry		1,209	24,368	25,577
Cavalry		218	3,335	3,553
Artillery		58	1,128	1,186
Engineers		12	9	21
Staff Corps		5	81	86
Train		24	115	139
General Staff		?	?	?
Total		1,526	29,036	30,562

II. PORTUGUESE TROOPS

CAVALRY.

D'Urban's Brigade : 1st and 11th Dragoons (12th Dragoons absent) ¹	32	450	482
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INFANTRY.

Power's Brigade, Third Division : 9th and 21st Line, 12th Caçadores . . .	90	2,107	2,197
Stubb's Brigade, Fourth Division : 11th and 23rd Line, 7th Caçadores . . .	137	2,417	2,554
Spry's Brigade, Fifth Division : 3rd and 15th Line, 8th Caçadores . . .	156	2,149	2,305

¹ The 12th Dragoons were marching to the rear in charge of the baggage-train.

	Officers.	Strength. Men.	Total.
Rezende's Brigade, Sixth Division : 8th and 12th Line, 9th Caçadores . . .	134	2,497	2,631
Collins's Brigade, Seventh Division : 7th and 19th Line, 2nd Caçadores . . .	132	2,036	2,168
Pack's Independent Brigade : 1st and 16th Line, 4th Caçadores . . .	85	2,520	2,605
Bradford's Independent Brigade : 13th and 14th Line, 5th Caçadores . . .	112	1,782	1,894
Attached to Light Division : 1st and 3rd Caçadores	30	1,037	1,067
ARTILLERY.			
Arriaga's battery	4	110	114
Total	912	17,105	18,017

III. SPANISH TROOPS

Carlos de España's Division : 2nd of Princesa, Tiradores de Castilla, 2nd of Jaen, 3rd of 1st Seville, Caçadores de Castilla, Lanceros de Castilla . . .	160	3,200	3,360
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GENERAL TOTAL

BRITISH	1,526	29,036	30,562
PORTUGUESE	912	17,105	18,017
SPANISH	160	3,200	3,360
Total	2,598	49,341	51,939

APPENDIX II

ARMY OF PORTUGAL—15TH JULY AND 1ST AUGUST 1812

The figures represent the men *présens sous les armes* (from the *Situation in the Archives de la Guerre*).

FIRST DIVISION (Foy).				15th July.		1st August.	
		Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.
First Brigade Chemineau	6th Leg. 1	.	.	22	551	20	333
	2	.	.	14	504	11	351
	69th Line 1	.	.	27	706	24	662
	2	.	.	23	702	23	660
Second Brigade Desgraviers	39th Line 1	.	.	31	494	31	460
	2	.	.	18	424	18	412
	76th Line 1	.	.	29	671	18	313
	2	.	.	27	680	27	574
Total Infantry	.	.	263	4372	183	3765	
3 Companies Artillery	.	.	7	207	7	207	
Total	.	.	270	4579	190	3972	
SECOND DIVISION (CLAUSEL).							
First Brigade Berlier	25th Leg. 1	.	.	25	500	22	462
	2	.	.	15	495	10	396
	3	.	.	14	490	11	364
	27th Line 1	.	.	22	826	20	636
	2	.	.	18	811	15	612
Second Brigade Barbot	50th Line 1	.	.	27	575	27	470
	2	.	.	14	557	11	398
	3	.	.	11	358	8	309
	59th Line 1	.	.	34	816	26	683
	2	.	.	13	715	22	615
3 Companies Artillery	.	.	206	6179	172	4925	
Total	.	.	213	6398	179	5141	

APPENDIX II

633

	THIRD DIVISION (FEREY). ¹	15th July.		1st August.	
		Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.
First Brigade Menne	Staff 31st Leg. 1 2 26th Line Staff 1 2 47th Line Staff 1 2 ? 3 70th Line Staff 1 2 Total Infantry 4 Companies Artillery	9	13	10	13
		22	755	20	764
		15	591	15	548
		9	14	9	16
		17	575	17	590
		18	556	17	510
Second Brigade ?		8	24	7	24
		20	611	18	601
		20	490	19	474
		18	503	19	501
		3	10	3	10
		19	486	13	595
		27	618	20	466
		216	5246	208	5162
		5	302	3	193
	Total	221	5548	211	5355

FOURTH DIVISION (SARRUT).

	FOURTH DIVISION (SARRUT).	15th July.		1st August.	
		Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.
First Brigade Fririon	2nd Leg. 1 2 3 26th Line 1 2 3 4th Leg. 1 2 3 130th Line absent ²	34	624	33	590
		16	577	19	545
		16	571	16	567
		35	646	36	627
		17	463	17	456
		17	461	18	431
Second Brigade ?		24	449	24	385
		18	365	18	330
		21	405	21	271
		—	—	—	—
		212	4561	216	4302
	4 Companies Artillery	5	238	5	214
	Total	217	4799	221	4516

¹ Taupin in command of the Division on 1st August.² Bilbao and St. Ander.

FIFTH DIVISION (MAUCUNE).				15th July.	1st August.	
	Officers.	Men.		Officers.	Men.	
First Brigade D'Arnauld	15th Line 1 . .	23	523	20	419	
	" " 2 . .	16	528	13	409	
	" " 3 . .	13	564	13	401	
	66th Line 4 . .	19	539	17	391	
	" " 5 . .	19	592	17	270	
Second Brigade Montfort	82nd Line 4 . .	21	452	20	333	
	" " 5 . .	20	514	19	396	
	86th Line 1 . .	18	605	15	519	
	" " 2 . .	12	550	13	442	
Total Infantry . . .	161	4867	159	3580		
Artillery . . .	4	212	4	212		
Total . . .	165	5079	163	3792		

SIXTH DIVISION (BRENNIER).

SIXTH DIVISION (BRENNIER).				15th July.	1st August.	
	Officers.	Men.		Officers.	Men.	
First Brigade Taupin	17th Leg. 1 . .	26	536	25	450	
	2 . .	20	511	17	405	
	65th Line 1 . .	29	630	25	539	
	2 . .	18	627	16	557	
	Detachm't 3 . .	6	31	5	33	
Second Brigade	" 4 . .	6	239	6	173	
	4th Etranger . .	9	79	9	79	
	22nd Line 1 . .	23	495	21	164	
	2 . .	20	500	15	476	
	3 . .	18	491	4	76	
Total Infantry . . .	190	4139	155	2952		
3 Companies Artillery . . .	4	213	4	213		
Total . . .	194	4352	159	3165		

SEVENTH DIVISION (THOMIÈRES).

First Brigade.	1st Line.	Staff .	4	13	4	13
Bonté	" " 1 . .	21	563	20	428	
	" " 2 . .	18	442	18	442	
	" " 3 . .	17	213	17	177	
	62nd Line. Staff .	20	452	20	394	
	" " 1 . .	15	518	12	276	
" " 2 . .	16	488	11	276		
	Detachment 3 . .	7	54	13	480	

APPENDIX II

635

		15th July.	1st August.		
		Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.
Second Brigade.	23rd Line 3, 4 .	—	—	—	— ¹
	{ 101st Line Staff .	12	19	8	16
	1 .	17	466	10	178
	2 .	15	446	6	119
	3 .	17	457	5	99
		—	—	—	—
	Total Infantry .	194	4347	158	2914
3 Companies Artillery .	. . 5	203		None.	
		—	—	—	—
	Total . .	199	4550	158	2914

EIGHTH DIVISION (BONNET).

First Brigade.	118th Line. Staff .	4	16	0	10
	{ " " 1 .	16	500	9	306
	" " 2 .	18	518	13	323
Gautier	119th Line. Staff .	16	550	15	385
	{ " " 3 .	4	7	4	6
	" " 1 .	21	403	14	209
	" " 2 .	19	435	11	314
	" " 3 .	20	420	19	302
Second Brigade.	120th Line. Staff .	4	4	4	3
	{ " " 1 .	20	583	19	391
	" " 2 .	19	563	21	379
?	122nd Line. Staff .	3	595	22	379
	{ " " 3 .	3	11	2	11
	" " 1 .	17	553	14	349
	" " 2 .	19	527	14	332
	" " 3 .	16	491	10	308
		—	—	—	—
	Total Infantry . .	236	6186	199	4107
1 Company Artillery	. . 3	107		None.	
		—	—	—	—
	Total . .	239	6293	199	4107 ²

CAVALRY DIVISION (CURTO).

First Brigade	{ 3rd Hussars (2) ³ .	17	231	14	185
	22nd Chasseurs (2) .	17	236	18	233
?	26th Chasseurs (2) .	16	278	18	225
	28th Chasseurs (1) .	7	87	3	39

¹ At Astorga, captured by the Spaniards, after the battle of Salamanca.² Should be 4007.³ Figures in parentheses show number of squadron.

		15th July. Officers.	Men.	1st August. Officers.	Men.
Second Brigade ?	13th Chasseurs (5) .	20	496	28	426
	14th Chasseurs (4) .	14	308	18	332
	Escadron de marche .	11	141	9	52
Total . . .		105	1777	111	1492

DRAGOON DIVISION (BOYER).

First Brigade	6th Dragoons (2) .	19	376	19	332
Carrié	11th Dragoons (2) .	19	411	18	359
	19th Dragoons (21)	15	328	16	294
	25th Dragoons .	18	314	18	282
Total Cavalry . . .		79	1429	78	1267

1 Company Heavy Artillery, 1 Com-					
pany Train Artillery	}	3	193	3	148
Artillery (not already counted) .		50	1450	22	707
Engineers		17	332	16	345
Gendarmerie Impériale . . .		6	129	6	186
Équipages Militaires (9 Companies)		26	742	22	707
General Staff. . . .		54	...	54	...
Total of the whole army . . .		2019	47,980	1714	38,737

Total Troop Horses . . .		4278	3231 ¹
Total Draught Horses . . .		2037	1847
Guns—12 pounders . . .		7	None.
8 pounders . . .		21	18
4 pounders . . .		36	27
3 pounders . . .		1	0
Howitzers . . .		13	13
		78	58

¹ Horses of Équipages Militaires, 15th July, 800; 1st August, 331. This is one of many indications which prove that the return of August 1 includes reinforcements received after the battle. The arithmetic of the French returns is frequently incorrect, though the errors never extend beyond units and tens.

INDEX

Abadia, General, supersedes Santocildes, 241; defeated by Dorsenne, 242; retires to Orense, 242; increased activity of, in Galicia, 371; to hinder Marmont, 377; to oppose Soult, 378; fails to make diversion in Galicia, 423

Abbé, General, defeated by guerillas, 436; Mina wounded in action against, 437

Abercromby, General, at Albuera, 199, 213

Abrantes, Bradford in command at, 87; Hill to retreat to, if necessary, 270; mentioned, 569

Acland, Gen. Sir Wroth Palmer, sickness prevents service in the Spanish Peninsula, 25

Adair, Mr., once British Envoy at Constantinople, gives Canning a copy of Austria's plan to invade Turkey, 288

Adaja river, Hill joins Wellington at, 605; Hill ordered to cross at Blasco Sancho, 607

Agueda gate, in Ciudad Rodrigo, Campbell's patrols reach, 361

Agueda river, Light Division and cavalry take up line of outposts on, 175; Spencer in command on, 217; Wellington's slight superiority on, 252; British cavalry and infantry start for, 253; Trench crosses and returns to Fuente-guinaldo, 263; Wellington reinforced on, 340; Marmont nervous at Wellington's movements on, 347; Wellington able to compel Marmont and Dorsenne to bridge the, 349; Fourth and Light Divisions cross, 350; position of Ciudad Rodrigo on the, 350; miseries of fording in winter, 365; flooded, 370; Marmont proposes to cross, and cut off Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, 378; Marmont quits Tormes for the, 392; approaches the, 416; river flooded, Marmont's danger, 419; Marmont retreats to headwaters of, 419; d'Espana disobeys Wellington at the, 423; Wellington leaves the, 454; Wellington crosses the, 460; Wellington ready to fall back on the, 612

Alaejos, Cotton reinforced at, 473; fierce fighting at, *ib.*

Alagon, French infantry at, 268; Hill to check French attempt at diversion at, 350

Alagrete, Hill passes, 271

Albacete, Joseph Bonaparte passes through, 559; mentioned, 593

Alba de Tormes, Marmont withdraws from, 467; Carlos d'Espana abandons in panic, 478; Marmont proposes to march on, but Foy protests, 478; Clauseau supports Foy, 478; Wellington sends cavalry to, 499; Hill ordered to, 607; Hill crosses the Tormes at, 608; Soult before, 608; Wellington's front extends from San Christobal to, 609; Wellington's dispositions at, to meet Soult, 614; Wellington blows up bridge, 615

Albany, American base to strike British communications, 520; General Dearborn at, 528; U.S. Government send war material to, 535; Dearborn in winter quarters at, 545

Alberqueria, Wellington sends Seventh Division to, 264; Seventh Division retire from, 265

Albuera, Beresford waits at, for guns, 139; Wellington advises Beresford to collect troops at, 143; Beresford, Blake, and Castaños agree to concentrate at, 182; Beresford brings up troops from Valverde, 182; description and situation of, 183; battle of, 184 *sq.*; mentioned, 231; Wellington leaves, 232; mentioned, 251; reference to Blake's Spaniards at, 277; Wellington determines to offer battle to Soult at, 393; Hill retires to, 454

Albufera, Duke of. *See* Suchet, Louis Gabriel

Alburquerque, Mendizabal retires to, 21;

disgraceful surrender, 122 ; possible turning movement against Wellington through, 232 ; Hill reaches, and hears that Girard has retreated, 272

Alcacer do Sal, troubles with Portuguese Government over transport of siege-train from, 376

Alcalá, Skerrett halts at, 571 ; Spaniards in second line at, 606

Alcantara, the Tagus opened for navigation as far as, 431 ; damaged bridge at, restored by suspension bridge, 431

Alcaraz, Ballesteros ordered to move on, 593

Alcoy, French at, 565

Alcúscar, Hill chases Girard to, 272 ; Hill occupies the village, 273 ; his secret bivouac, 273 ; terrible storm at, 273

Aldea da Ponte, Wellington's retreat by, 265 ; French occupy, 266 ; Marmont's rear at, 267-8

Aldea de Cano, Girard in neighbourhood during retreat, 272 ; Hill pursues Girard to, 272

Aldea du Ribeira, Wellington's possible line of retreat from Fuentes, 157

Aldea Lengua, Wellington's new centre before Salamanca, 464 ; Wellington's front extends through to Alba, 609

Aldea Mayor, Clause's rearguard sighted at, 552

Aldearrubia, Marmont withdraws to, 463 ; and commands the ford of Huerta, 464 ; Wellington turns west from parallel line with Marmont to, 477

Aldea Tejada, *see* note for mistake as to Tejares, 480 ; the western extremity of Wellington's line, 484 ; Pakenham crosses the Tormes towards, 485 ; Wellington's extreme right (for battle of Tormes), 615

Aldea Velha, Montbrun and Souham brought to a stand at, 266

Alemejo, Masséna proposes to send Fifth Corps there, 18 ; Wellington advises withdrawal of property and supplies from, 19 ; Blake marches through, 242 ; a strong force at, necessary to watch French in Estremadura, 252 ; Drouet to invade, 440

Alexander I., Tsar of Russia, coldness towards Napoleon, 6 ; proposals for three-fold partition of Prussia, 286

Alfaiates, Spencer retires to, 229 ; Wellington's retreat to, 265 ; British patrols enter, 419

Algéciras Bay, British squadron seeks shelter in, 331

Algiers, Dey of, U.S. attitude towards, 310

Alicante, Napoleon desires Soult to aid Suchet in reducing, 294 ; Soult desires to join Suchet in siege of, 326 ; Bentinck ships 7000 men for, 471 ; Maitland lands at, 565 ; march to, to pick up Maitland, out of question, 588 ; Wellington thinks Joseph and Soult will capture, before attacking Hill, 594

Aliseda, Girard advances to, but falls back to Arroyo del Puerto and Cáceres, 272 ; Morillo reoccupies, 272

Almada, Heights of, 30

Almanza, Villatte retires to the creek of, to avoid further attack from Lardizabal, 48 ; Soult in contact with Joseph's patrols at, 592

Almaraz, Marmont at, 231 ; and holds strong bridgehead at, 238 ; Hill's enterprise to capture bridge of boats postponed, 375 ; Hill to destroy bridge at, 369 ; Wellington resolves to destroy French bridge and bridgehead at, 424 ; Marmont's fortifications for defence of bridge of boats at, 425 ; Hill making for, 426-7 ; destroys bridge, 444 ; Hill to guard, 446 ; Hill ordered to cross the river at, 457 ; Hill reaches, 571

Almeida, Masséna keeps the Ninth Division there, 100 ; Wellington held up at, 113 ; Masséna bent on its relief, 150 ; Wellington determines to foil him, 151 ; Pack told off for blockade of, 153 ; convoy for, appropriated by Masséna, 170 ; Masséna orders Brennier to evacuate, 170-71 ; Wellington moves on, 175 ; Brennier's preparations for destruction of, 176 ; Colonel do Rego and Colonel Iremonger deceived, 177 ; to be blown up if Marmont advances, 217 ; Spencer blows up remaining fortifications, 229 ; carts made at, for Wellington's army, 345 ; Fifth and Sixth Divisions cross the Coa at, 350 ; Napoleon orders Marmont to threaten, 373 ; d'Espana falls back to, 416 ; Le Mesurier's sortie, 417 ; Marmont resolves to storm, 417 ; Marmont's responsibility for French failure at, 422

Almendral, Blake at, while Soult was approaching, 187

Almendralejo, Long retires to, before Soult, 182 ; arrival of Soult's advance guard, 182 ; mentioned, 218 ; British infantry at, 220 ; Soult at, 231 ; Hill watches Marmont at, 383 ; Erskine at, 424 ; Hill at, 451

Almenera, German Hussars reach, 552

Almería, Blake lands at, 243

Alten, Major-general Charles von, his brigade of Germans in Albuera, 184 ; hotly engaged with Godinot's skirmishers at Albuera, 191 ; brigade suffers little, 209 ; his cavalry at Fuenteguinaldo, 263

Alten, Major-general Victor, with 1st German Hussars, left on the Yeltes, 382 ; abandons Agueda, 416 ; crosses the Tagus at Villa Velha, 417 ; ordered to Castello Branco, 418 ; consequences of his misconduct, 423 ; aids Cotton, 473 ; drives Carrié's brigade back at ford near Castrillo, 475 ; his brigade commanded by Arentschild during his absence, 487 ; wounded at Salamanca, 506

Alva river, disposition of Massena's troops along the, 88-9

Alverca, General De Grey's winter quarters, 269

Amarante, General, in position to foil Joseph, 591

Amelia, Princess (youngest daughter of George III.), died, 3

America, on verge of war with England, 313 ; American interests, 313 ; Congress votes addition to army, but refuses to increase the naval force, 314 ; methods for evading the embargo, 315 ; divided opinion in, on quarrel with England, 322 ; causes of war discussed, 323-4

American Army, in peace, 521 ; Congress authorises levies, 521 ; Militia numerous, 521 ; growing in dimensions, 537 ; its distribution, 537

American commerce, depredations on, by French cruisers, 308 ; France refuses indemnity, 308

American hate to England, 310

American Navy, increasing credit, 548 ; Wellington's comment on, 549

American Non-Intercourse Act, produces serious consequences, 342

American privateers, expected to damage British merchant shipping, 308

American Senate, ratifies Jay's Treaty, 307

American shipping, judicious conduct of English Government towards, 548

Amherstburg, Fort, 520 ; English vessel from, captures American ship, 525 ; Hull receives discretionary orders to capture, 525 ; Brock's fear if it falls into Hull's hands, 526 ; Proctor sent to take command, 526 ; Brock starts for, 529-30 ; American expedition against, wrong, 532 ; Prevost orders reduction of garrison at, 533 ; Brock sees necessity for strengthening, 534 ; Proctor leaves, 546

Andalusia, Soult's retreat to, nullifies his campaign, 39 ; almost denuded of French troops, 236 ; a base of French operations, 294 ; Soult's aim, to make it a base against Estremadura and Portugal, 326 ; fate of, if Tarifa had fallen, 337 ; Latour-Maubourg in, 372 ; Soult uneasy as to, 383 ; Wellington's intention to drive Soult out, 411 ; Spanish Government press Wellington to invade, 444 ; doubtful whether Wellington intends to invade, 445 ; Soult ordered to evacuate, 551 ; Joseph orders Soult to evacuate, 567 ; consideration of its position, 568 ; Soult prepares to evacuate, 570 ; Wellington's expectations concerning evacuation, 589 ; conditions under which Joseph must have gone to, 591

Andujar, 441

Anson, Colonel George, at Niza, 230 ; in reserve about Arronches, 234 ; his cavalry at Rendo, 267 ; halts at Castrejon, 473 ; eager charge at Salamanca, 493 ; presses Sarrut's left flank, 497 ; pursues French Army, 499 ; fight at Garcia Hernandez, 500 ; pursues routed French at Salamanca, 502 ; comes within range of a French battery, 510 ; driven to the Douro by Clausel, 563 ; fails to damage French rearguard, 564 ; movements of his cavalry during Wellington's retreat, 596-7 ; crosses the Arlanza, 598 ; fights at Arlanza river, 599 ; his brigade greatly shaken, 600

Aragon, French campaign in, 245 ; Reille ordered to quit, and join Suchet, 338 ; Foy thinks Marmont should strike at Army of, 348 ; to be protected by Army of the Ebro, 434

Aranda de Duero, Duran escalades and captures, 437 ; Foy observes, 551 ; a possible route for Wellington, 564 ; what might have happened if Wellington had taken up a position at, 591

Aranjuez, Joseph crosses the Tagus at, 559 ; road to, commanded by guns, 593 ; Hill destroys bridge of, 606 ; Soult arrives, 606 ; d'Erlon ordered to, 607

Arapiles, Marmont seizes, to protect his army, 483 ; the Guards in the village of, 484 ; and see *Battles*, Salamanca ; Wellington's dispositions to meet Soult, 614 ; Wellington's Second Division at, 615

Arentschild, Lieutenant-colonel Frederick von, breaks Curto's charge with his German Hussars, 489 ; follows up the defeated cavalry, 492 ; presses on Sarrut's left flank, 497 ; reports French crossed the Tormes, 499

Arenys de Mar, Campoverde retires to, 247

Arevalo, Clausel brings his troops to, 550 ; Clinton falls back to, 562 ; Wellington arrives, 563 ; Hill moves towards, 607 ; Joseph at, 608 ; Souham's ability to turn Wellington's left flank if at, 608

Arganda, Spaniards in second line at, 606 ; Soult's plan to turn Hill's position at, 607

Arlaban, Mina captures great convoy at, 436-7
 Arlanza river, Bock's cavalry at, 598 ; Anson crosses, 599 ; perilous position of British rearguard, 600
 Arlanzon river, Clauseau hurries up the valley, 564 ; Sixth Division in siege of Burgos stationed here, 573 ; British retreat across, 596 ; recross, 596 ; n., 597
 Armstrong, General, American Minister, in Paris, invited by France to declare war with England, 312 ; his protest against Napoleon's seizure of American vessels, 315
 Arronches, Beresford's army at, 123 ; Beresford moves on, 123 ; Allies' army at, 232 ; three divisions echeloned on road from to Elvas, 233 ; note on Fifth Division, 233 n. ; Anson and Slade in reserve at, 234
 Arroyo de la Cisterniga, Wellington finds French in force at, 563 ; Clauseau escapes, 563
 Arroyo del Puerco, Girard falls back to, 272
 Arroyo Molinos, in line of Girard's retreat, 272 ; Girard at, ignorant of Hill's approach, 273 ; and see *Battles*
 Arzobispo, d'Erlon to march to, to cover Madrid, 442
 Ashworth, General, with Hill, 424
 Astorga, Santocildes sent to, 240 ; French garrison evacuates to Leon, 240 ; Bonnet marches to, 242 ; Castaños advances on, 447 ; Santocildes to reduce his force at to safest minimum, 471 ; surrenders, 562
 Asturias, deputies of, appeal to England for help, 239 ; fine spirit of province under leadership of Porlier, 239 ; Bonnet in command at, 240 ; Bonnet's advance to, 269 ; Bonnet quits, 370 ; Marmont detaches strong division to, 392 ; strength of Marmont's army at, 422 ; Bonnet summoned from, 460
 Aubert, Major, in command at Fort Napoleon, surprised and wounded, 427
 Auglaise river, junction with the Maumee river at Fort Defiance, 545
 Austerlitz, refusal of Russia to make peace after, 11
 Austria, pressed to join Russia, 284 ; her sufferings in fighting for Europe, 285 ; her alliance with France, 285 ; terms, 286 ; presses for continuance of Russo-Turkish war, 287 ; proof of her duplicity regarding invasion of Turkey, 288 ; results in peace between Turkey and Russia, 288
 Avila, Clauseau there to gather supplies, 268 ; French movements about, 348 ; news of French movements at, premature, 349 ; French Division in, 354 ; portion of French army cantoned in, 370 ; Clauseau at, 422
 Ayamonte, Blake lands at, to join Balsteros, 142 ; Zayas embarks at, 243 ; arrival of Spanish right at, 424
 Azava river, French driven back after forcing the bridge at Marialva, 150 ; Wellington collects his army on, 450
 Azuaga, Penne Villemur's reconnaissance towards, 451 ; d'Erlon falls back to, 456
 Babil Fuente, Marmont leaves a Division on heights of, 479 ; Marmont calls up forces at, 482 ; mentioned, 609
 Bacellar, General (Portuguese), on defeat of Silveira, compels Claparéde to retire, 32 ; to harass Soult in Tras os Montes, 378 ; to protect British magazines on the Douro and Mondego, 378 ; retires to Lamego, 418
 Badajoz, Soult prepares for siege of, 19 ; invested by Soult, 22 ; Soult, by defeat of Mendizabal, free to invest, 24 ; Wellington's concern at Soult's victory at, 33 ; promised immediate relief, 37 ; Menacho killed in sortie, 38 ; Imaz, his successor, capitulates, 38 ; Wellington receives news of its fall, 87 ; Beresford moving to attack Soult, 120 ; Latour-Maubourg falls back to Llerena, 138 ; dispositions for siege of, 142 ; Wellington arrives, 142-3 ; instructions to Beresford, 143 ; Wellington orders blockade of, 144 ; invested, 144-5 ; description of, defences, etc., 145 ; Wellington's orders, 146 ; news of French relief force, 147 ; Beresford abandons siege and retreats to Elvas, 148 ; Kemmis's brigade to cross the ford above, 185 ; Hamilton returns to and reinvests, 209 ; necessary to drive Soult back before investment, 217 ; disposition of Wellington's army, 220 ; preparations for siege, 221 ; investment, 222 ; weakness of Wellington's artillery, 222-3 ; castle holds out, 224 ; Wellington determines to raise siege, 225 ; Marmont and Soult enter, 232 ; revictualled by Marmont, 238 ; question of Wellington's further operations respecting, 251 ; Soult meditates revictualling, 271 ; Wellington feels it imperative to capture, 347 ; prepares for siege, 369 ; difficulties in way of enterprise against, 375 ; courses open to Marmont on hearing of siege of, 377 ; Soult believes it invested by Hill, 381 ; Wellington resolves on siege, 382 ; invested,

383 ; strengthened since its last investment, 384 ; attack on castle, opening of cannonade, 386 ; completion of British batteries at various points, 387 ; capture of Picurina, 390 ; lunette of San Roque attacked, 391 ; siege pursued with greater vigour, 392-3 ; assault, and orders for, 394-403 ; Philippon surrenders, 403 ; sack and pillage, 403-5 ; British losses, 405 ; criticism of besieging tactics, contentions of engineers rejected, 406-9 ; magnitude of the achievement, 409-10 ; discussion of Wellington's stroke at, 421 ; Marmont's responsibility for fall of, 422 ; safety of, thrown on Wellington by Spanish Government, 423 ; strategical value of, to Wellington, 430-32 ; Joseph hears of its fall, 440 ; Hill to retire to and call out Portuguese Militia if necessary, 446 ; Wellington secures his advanced bases at, 460

Balearic Islands, Whittingham's force for defence of, 556

Ballesteros, General Francisco, marching on the Condado de Niebla to threaten Seville, 20 ; stand and defeat at Villanueva, 21 ; begins raid from Condado de Niebla, 68 ; reinforced by Blake at Huelva, 140 ; attacked by Maransin, 142 ; driven back, 142 ; to establish himself at Burguillos, 143 ; commands one of Blake's divisions at Albuera, 188 ; follows Blake to Cadiz, 243 ; surprises and defeats Semele, 244 ; retires to Gibraltar, 244 ; defeats Soult, 244 ; Soult finds it necessary to get rid of him, 326 ; finds refuge under guns of Gibraltar, 327 ; attacks French outposts, 328 ; ability to drive French out of Tarifa if they had captured it, 337 ; too dangerous to be unsurveyed, 372 ; Castaños proposes that he should take part in forthcoming operations, 377 ; Wellington refuses, 377 ; attacks Maransin but retires to Tarifa, 381 ; *see n.* on victory ; Soult's uneasiness at leaving Andalusia exposed to, 383 ; watched, 391 ; closing in on Seville, 411 ; surprises and drives Rey to Malaga, 412 ; retires to mountains of Ronda, 412 ; Soult fears he will move out from the mountains of San Roque, 425 ; Napoleon says he may be ignored, 440 ; a source of anxiety to Soult, 445 ; to threaten Seville, 446 ; attacks Soult, and is badly beaten, 447-8 ; eager for revenge on Soult, 458 ; harasses army of South, 554 ; counted on to hold Joseph in diversion, 593 ; resents Wellington's appointment to supreme command, and is superseded, 594

Bank notes, Lord King's refusal to accept them during financial crisis, 5 ; notes made legal tender by Act of Parliament, 5 ; Wellington fails to prevail on Spanish merchants to accept, 379

Baños, pass of, large column of enemy in, 229 ; Marmont sends cavalry and Sixth Division to, 256 ; Soult tells Joseph that Marmont should place his army there, 443

Baraguay d' Hilliers, General, collects troops for blockade of Figueras, 17

Barba del Puerco, Erskine blocks bridge at, 175 ; Wellington's Sixth Division at, 253

Barbacena, Visconde de, deplorable condition of his Portuguese cavalry at close of campaign, 116

Barbary, Soult's mission to, for supplies, 326 ; Mr. Stuart's counter-mission for Britain, 326

Barca d'Alva, the Douro opened for navigation as far as, 431

Barcarrota, Spanish army there, 220

Barcelona, failure of Campoverde's attack, 16 ; Valencian infantry shipped at, by Codrington, 247 ; Suchet arrives, 248 ; Lacy harasses French line of communication between Lerida and, 249 ; to be revictualled by army of the Ebro, 434 ; Lamarque harassed on road from, 438

Barnard, Colonel Andrew, endeavours to stop sack and pillage at Ciudad Rodrigo, 364

Barrié, General, Governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, Marmont's estimate of him, 352 ; tells Marmont of his peril at Ciudad Rodrigo, 355 ; condemned for loss of Ciudad Rodrigo, 367

Barrois, General, moves from Ronda, 327 ; ordered to unite with army, 328 ; reinforces d'Erlon, 453 ; not to cross the Guadiana, 454 ; part of infantry and cavalry transferred to Army of Centre, 593

Basque Provinces, Mina's successes in, 436

Bathurst, Benjamin, diplomatist ; his mysterious disappearance, 28

Bathurst, Lieutenant-colonel James, Wellington's Military Secretary, shows signs of mental disorder, 28 ; sent home invalidated, 29

Battles, Combats, and Sieges :—

Alba de Tormes, 608-9

Albuera, 185, 188, 198

Alburquerque, 121

Aldea da Ponte, 266

Almaraz, 427-8

Altafulla, 339, 437

Arroyo Molinos, 273-6

Astorga, 470, 561

Battles, Combats, and Sieges:—

Azava, 260
 Badajoz, 141 *et seq.*; 327, 383
 Barrosa, 48-56
Baza, 243
 Belmonte, 606
Belpuig, 249
Benavides, 241
 Burgos, 573
 Cadiz, 62, 380
 Campo Maior, 124-33
 Casal Novo, 81
Castalla, 556
 Castrillo, 475-6
Cervera, 249
 Ciudad Rodrigo, 352
 Coa, 101
 Detroit, 531
 El Bodon, 260-1
 Figueras, 17, 18
 Fort Erie, 544
 Fort Gaetano, 465
 Fort La Merced, 465
 Fort Napoleon, 428
 Fort Ragusa, 428
 Fort San Vicente, 465
 Foz d'Arouce, 83-6
 Frenchmen's Creek, 544
 Frenchtown, 546
 Fuentes de Oñoro, 155-75
 Garcia Hernandez, 499-500; 511-12
Gebora, 24
 Granja, 451
 Hormaza River, 598
 Huelva, 618-19
Igualada, 249
 La China, 560
 Las Rozas, 557-9
 Los Santos, 140-41
 Maguilla, 451, 452
 Mirabete Castle, 427
 Monasterio, 595
Montserrat, 248
 Niebla, 242
 Ocaña, 24-5
Olivença, 21-2
 Orvigo, 241
 Palencia, 602
Peneranda da Douro, 437
Peniscola, 339
 Puent Larga, 606
 Queenston, 539-42
 Redinha, 75-6
Reuss, 339
Roda, 439
 Rubena, 595
 Rueda, 473
Sabugal, 101 *et seq.*
Sagunto, 278
 Salamanca, 461 *et seq.*, 485-504

Battles, Combats, and Sieges:—

San Cristobal, 223
Sanguesa, 436
Santander, 242
Santi Petri, 48
Seville, 570
 Tarifa, 331-5
Tarragona, 245-7
Tordesillas, 561
Tordesillas, 604-5
Tortosa, 15 *et seq.*
Usagre, 20
Usagre, 218-20
 Val de la Mulla, 113
Valencia, 338 *et seq.*
Valladolid, 241, 436
 Valladolid, 604
 Venta del Pozo. *See* Hormaza
 Villagarcia, 413
 Villa Muriel, 603
Villodrigo defile. *See* Hormaza
 Baynes, Colonel Edward, sent by Prevost to treat with Dearborn for suspension of hostilities, 528
 Bayona, Hill secures bridge at, 606
 Bayonne (Constitution of), Napoleon's demand for Spain to be ruled by it, 13; refusal by the Cortes, 13; army at, awaiting Napoleon's presence in Spain, 296; army removed to Vitoria, 296; report from, of arrival of cannon for Marmont, 392
 Baza, Blake joins Freire at, 243; Spanish Army of Murcia quiet since defeat at, 243
 Beckwith, Colonel Sidney, in command of 1st Brigade at Sabugal, 103-7; Wellington's commendation, 110; magnanimity of, towards Hopkins, 110
 Beguines, General, reinforces Lapeña, 43; retirement to Medina Sidonia, 66; and to Algeciras, 67
 Beira (Lower), Portuguese cavalry in, 232; Marmont in, 423; journey to, from Estremadura, shortened by bridge at Alcantara, 431; Marmont to advance into, to relieve Badajoz, 439; Marmont's raid into, 448
 Bejar, Marmont at, 231; French movements about, 348
 Belgium resents Napoleon's levies for French objects, 6; restive under Napoleon's demands, 290
 Belmonte mentioned, 95; French Eighth Corps makes wide reconnaissances from, 96; Spencer to retreat thither if Marmont advances, 217
 Belpuig surprised by Lacy, 249
 Belson, Colonel, of the 28th, at Barrosa, 59

Benavente, headquarters of Serres, 240; French post isolated, 552; Wellington orders Santocildes to blockade, 552; Foy overthrows Spanish rearguard at, 562

Bentinck, Lord William, appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Commander-in-Chief in Naples, 300; in Sicily, 301; returns home, 301; his ambition, 302; lays his scheme before Wellesley, 303; converts British Government to his views, 304; arrival in Italy, 305; demands command of Sicilian army, 305; his ambitions for Italy, 306; allows renewal of Sicilian subsidy, 306; desires to retain Clinton and Macfarlane, 342; intent on operations in Italy rather than Eastern Spain, 347; to keep Suchet occupied, and undertake siege of Tarragona, 447; outbids Wellington for money at Gibraltar, 450; tells Wellington he is renouncing Spain for Italy, 470; divides his force, 471; his divided energy, 554; Wellington presses for diversion on east coast of Spain, 555

Beresford, William Carr, Marshal, succeeds to command of Second Division south of Tagus, 29; to attack the French at Punhete, 35; forbears the attack, 36; ordered to Badajoz, 37; summoned to talk matters over with Wellington, 87; ordered to cross the Guadiana, and attack Soult, 120; moves down to Portalegre, 122; composition of his army there, 122; conduct at action of Campo Maior, 123-133; misunderstanding with Long, 133; his behaviour at battle of Campo Maior, 134; discussion of his position, 135; pushes part of his force to Elvas, 137; crosses the Guadiana, 138; his ill-luck in pursuit of French army, 139; proceeds to Albuera, 139; returns for siege of Badajoz, 141; Wellington's instructions relative to Badajoz, 143; threatened by Marmont, 179; severs Soult's communications with Badajoz, 181; moves from Badajoz to Valverde, 182; decides to concentrate at Albuera, 182; reaches Albuera, 184; at battle of Albuera, 184-205; joined by Kemmis's brigade, 209; his proceedings considered, 211; his chivalrous recognition of his troops' conduct, 214; nervous letter to Wellington, 216; retires to Lisbon, 220; mentioned, 251; completes investment of Badajoz on south bank of the Guadiana, 383; goes with Wellington to aid Cotton, 473; dissuades Wellington from the offensive at Salamanca, 485; his position in the battle, 487; brings French counter-attack to a standstill, 496; wounded at Salamanca, 506

Berkeley, Admiral Sir George, Wellington requests him to keep baggage on his ships, 118

Berlanga, mentioned, 454; d'Erlon falls back to, 456; mentioned, 457

Berlin, Napoleon threatens to march on, 284

Berlin Decree, Napoleon's counterblast to England's proclamation of blockade, 309; Napoleon's condition for revocation of, 318; American Minister finds no evidence of repeal of, 321

Berneja, Lapeña takes French lines at, 48

Bernadotte, Marshal, Crown Prince of Sweden, desired by Swedes as successor to Charles XIII., 8; compelled to declare war against England, 8; refuses to be dictated to by Napoleon as to blockade, 286

Berthier, Marshal, Marmont's complaint to him of transport difficulties, 254; Marmont's letter to, predicting disaster because of Napoleon's system, 380; demand from Soult for troops and enlarged powers, 382; dispatch to Suchet, 469

Bessières, Marshal, Duke of Istria, in sole command of troops in Northern Spain, 15; requires Valladolid districts to supply his army, 93; mistaken report to Masséna as to provisions at Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo, 151; cannot reinforce Masséna, 151; refuses to give Montbrun free use of Lepic's cavalry at Fuentes, 163 n.; engaged with guerilla bands, 217; required to look to safety of Salamanca in Marmont's absence, 228; his force in Northern Spain, 240; his headquarters at Valladolid attacked by guerillas, 241; recalled from his command by Napoleon, 241; Wellington's estimate of his army, 251

Bevan, Colonel, Wellington blames him for allowing Brennier to escape from Almeida, 178; his suicide, 178

Bienvenida, advanced Spanish parties at, 220; Cotton at, 413; force assembled at, 413; mentioned, 453; d'Erlon's reinforcements reach him at, 454

Biscay, guerillas against French in, 437

Bismulla, Graham retires upon, 265

Bissett (Mr.), succeeds Kennedy as Commissary General, 344; his account of organisation of transport and supply, 344; Wellington's praise of his services at Salamanca, 513; his failure during retreat from Burgos, 621

Black Rock, one of the American chain

of posts, 519 ; Smyth assembles force at, 543

Blake, General Joachim, reinforces Ballesteros at Huelva, 140 ; sails from Zayas to join Ballesteros, 142 ; to fix his quarters at Xerez, 143 ; meets Beresford at Almendralejo, and agrees to serve under him, 182 ; on Stewart's right at Albuera, 185-193 ; his perversity, 212 ; threatens Seville, 231 ; reported to Soult to be marching to Condado de Niebla, 237 ; besieges the castle of Niebla, 242 ; retires before Godinot and Conroux to Cadiz, 243 ; lands at Almeria and joins Freire at Baza, 243 ; fails to destroy the stores at Seville, 249 ; falls back at Murviedro, thence to the Guadalquivir, 277 ; marches to relief of Sagunto, 278 ; defeat by Suchet, 278 ; capitulates, 339 ; deserters from his army, 339

Blakeney, Lieutenant, charges Girard's bayonets with the 28th, 275

Blasco Sancho, Joseph at, 552 ; Hill ordered to, 607

Blockade, Europe's resentment of this under Napoleon, 6 ; from Elbe to Brest by British Government, 309 ; restriction of neutrals, 309

Boadilla, Wellington retreats from Tormes to, 618

Bock, General, retires in good order before the French at Huerta, 464 ; aids Cotton, 473 ; pursues the French crossing the Tormes, 499 ; fights at Garcia Hernandez, 500 ; his cavalry sent to Arevalo, 563 ; they cross the Arlanzon, 596 ; movements during Wellington's retreat, 597 ; near the Arlanza, 598 ; his charge at Arlanza river, 599

"Bomba," nickname conferred on the Hereditary Prince of Naples, 305

Bonnemain, General, joins Drouet, 456

Bonnet, General, in command in Asturias, 240 ; on bank of the Orvigo, 241 ; compelled to retire to Leon, 241 ; leaves Leon for Astorga, 242 ; his hopeless task, to occupy Asturias, 269 ; to join Marmont, 349 ; summoned from Asturias, 367 ; in cantonments in Leon, 370-1 ; ordered to Asturias, 373 ; on the Tormes, 380 ; cantonment in Asturias, 422 ; goes to Army of the North, and ordered to go to Asturias, 434 ; summoned to the Douro, 460 ; his strength at Salamanca, 463 n. ; joins Marmont, 468 ; crosses the bridge at Toro, and is recalled, 473 ; asks leave to attack Wellington's straggling vehicles, 477 ; his division massed in rear of Greater Arapil, 483 ; disabled at Salamanca, 490 ; counter-attack on Wellington's centre, 495 ; defeat by Clinton at Salamanca, 496-7 ; comment on what happened after Salamanca, 504

Boucifarina, Wellington's Fourth Division at, 267

Boulogne, Napoleon at, preparing for invasion of England, 257

Bourbon Dynasty, Bentinck's scheme for restoration of, in Italy, 303

Bourke, French General, intercepts Sarsfield, 438 ; meets him at Roda, but is beaten, 439

Bowes, General, wounded in capture of Badajoz, 405 ; killed in unsuccessful assault on La Merced, 465

Boyer, General, cavalry in Marmont's rear, 484 ; dragoons stationed on Clausel's flank, 486 ; covers Clausel's right flank, 495 ; charges Stubbs's Portuguese, 496 ; fortunate diversion during fight at Arlanza river, 600

Bradford, General, his Portuguese brigade in Cole's rear near Las Torres, 484 ; his brigade at Salamanca, 491 ; small losses of his brigade, 509 n. ; sent to Arevalo, 563

Brayer, General, mortally wounded at Albuera, 201

Brennier, General, calls for protection while withdrawing the artillery from Almeida, 96 ; preparations for destruction and evacuation of Almeida, 176 ; retreat, 177 ; Reynier covers his passage of the river, 177 ; gallant feat of arms, 178 ; leaves Plasencia, and crosses the Tietar, 347 ; shifted to Valley of Tagus, 348 ; cantonment of Medina del Campo, 422 ; his position for battle of Salamanca, 484 ; replaces Thomières on El Siervo, 486

Briche, General, Soult's advanced guard reconnoitres Beresford's position, 187 ; supports Godinot at Albuera, 191 ; ordered to cross the ford at Usagre, 219 ; driven back by Otway, 219

Briviesca, Army of Portugal concentrates at, 595

Brock, Brigadier-General Isaac, Colonel of the Forty-ninth Regiment, mutiny in his regiment, 516 ; recommends formation of Veteran battalion, 516 ; chosen Commander-in-Chief and Civil Administrator of Upper Canada, 522 ; his services, 522 ; transferred from Lower to Upper Canada, 522 ; urges Prevost to surprise Detroit and Mackinac, 523 ; hears of declaration war, 524 ; sends Captain Roberts to capture Mackinac, 524 ; sends Proctor to Amherstburg, 526 ;

difficulties with refractory militia, 527 ; ignorant of suspension of hostilities, 529 ; assembles Indians, and asks Tecumah to drive enemy out of Detroit, 530 ; attacks Detroit, 531 ; Hull capitulates, 531 ; strained relations with Prevost, 533 ; his estimate of American unmilitary quality, 534 ; concern at American naval successes, 536 ; his inferiority to the enemy, 537 ; action of Queenston and death, 537-40

Bron, Brigadier-general, his cavalry routed, 219 ; captured at Arroyo Molinos, 274

Browne, Brigadier-general, at Barrosa, 49-55

Brown's Point, British forces at, 537 ; militia support Williams at, 540

Brownstown, Proctor concentrates at, 546

Brunswick Oels Infantry, admirable conduct at Fuentes, 162 ; cowardly conduct at Tordesillas, 605

Bucharest, Treaty of, between Russia and Turkey, 288

Buffalo, Elliott orders up American seamen to, 536 ; American forces at, 537

Buffalo Creek, one of the American chain of posts, 519

Bull, Captain Robert, engaged at Arlanza river, 597-9 ; something wrong with his battery, 601

Burgos, Wellington discontented with engineers at, 226 ; Young Guard cantoned at, 240 ; wastage of Frenchmen and horses on lines of communication, 255 ; call for troops to, and thence to France, 372 ; Soult sends troops to, 381 ; havoc by guerillas at, under priest Mermo, 437 ; Clausel at, 552 ; Clausel retreats through, 564 ; Wellington takes siege in hand, 572-82 ; Wellington abandons siege, 583 ; conditions under which it might have fallen, 590 ; Hill's call for assistance leads to final raising of siege, 594 ; retreat from, ended at Ciudad Rodrigo, 621 ; comments on the retreat, 621-23

Burgoyne, Major John, Adjutant-general of the Engineers, complains of British troops not working up to time, 365 ; in assault on the castle at Badajoz, 397 ; sent to Villa Velha to remove bridge of boats, 418 ; constructs battery before San Vicente, 461 ; does not bear out Napier's comments on Clausel's retreat, 564 ; remonstrance with Wellington, and Wellington's answer, 584

Burguillos, Ballesteros to establish himself at, 143

Burlington, Dearborn in winter quarters at, 545

Burlington Bay, Brock arrives at, with militia, 529

Burne, General, at Malpartida to watch road to Barba del Puerco, 175

Byng, General John, joins Wellington, 342

Cabeça Velosa, Wellington brings his second line to join the first at, 477

Cabezon, Wellington retreats to, 603 ; Souham marches towards the bridge, 603 ; Wellington destroys bridge at, 605

Cabinet, British, disruption of, because of quarrel between Castlereagh and Canning, 318 ; Madison encouraged to renew negotiations, 318 ; decline to accede to Wellington's proposal as to English Exchequer Bills, 378 ; Liverpool's objections, 378 n.

Cabrera, General, Wellington sends him from Puebla de Senabria to La Bañeza, 240 ; brings Serras to a standstill near La Bañeza, 241

Cabrerizos, Wellington leaves d'Urban at, 479 ; Pakenham crosses the Tormes by ford at, towards Aldea Tejada, 485

Cañeres, Hill's Spanish troops at, 270 ; Girard advances to, 271 ; Girard falls back to, 272

Cacigal, Major-general, disgraceful surrender of Alburquerque to Latour Maubourg, 122

Cadiz, Napoleon's misleading intelligence to Soult as to strength of British here, 18 ; Lapeña and Graham decide on a sortie by sea, 40 ; Lapeña's mistakes, and retreat of French, 40-69 ; sortie from, 60 ; Victor compelled to retreat, 61 ; French mismanagement, 63 ; Allies' and French losses, 64 ; sortie, 65 ; Lapeña's complaint of Graham, 65 ; French troops demoralised by defeat, 66 ; friction among Allies, 67 ; French, in spite of defeat at Barrosa, persist in siege of, 69 ; Blake retires to, 243 ; question of Wellington attempting relief of, 251 ; a possible refuge for Ballesteros, 326 ; Barrois cut off from, by floods, 328 ; troops sent from, to defend citadel of Cartagena, 347 ; besieging army round, commanded by Villatte, 371 ; Soult prepares to press the siege, 380 ; Soult before, 382 ; Soult provides for beleaguerment of, while advancing to relief of Badajoz, 391 ; Graham's hope for raising siege of, 412 ; Soult compelled to blockade, 445 ; ammunition for heavy guns sent from, to Bentinck, 447 ; still besieged, 554 ; siege raised, 566 ; Soult pushed forward the siege works before, 568-9 ; Soult withdraws from, leaving

batteries, 571 ; mentioned, 590 ; mentioned, 606

Caffarelli, General, reinforces Marmont, 256 ; his division absorbed by Army of the North, 434 ; reply to Joseph, 443 ; communications broken between him and Marmont, 447 ; Marmont asks reinforcements from, 460 ; unable, and therefore fails Marmont, 468-9 ; distracted by Popham's action on the coast, 470 ; cannot reinforce Marmont, 471 ; distraught by guerrilla activity, and Popham from the sea, 554 ; marching for relief of Burgos, 594 ; comment on the fight at Arlanza river, 600 ; at Burgos, 609

Caia river, Beresford to take up a position on, 143 ; British troops concentrating in valley of, 231 ; Wellington on heights near, 232 ; his right prolonged to the bridge at, 233 ; mentioned, 234

Calabria, Lower, Murat assembling troops in, 304

Calavarassa de Abajo, Wellington's advanced cavalry pushed forward to, 479

Calavarassa de Arriba, 479-83 ; Jourdan proposes to pierce Wellington's centre at, 612

Calzadilla, advanced Spanish parties at, 220

Campbell, Brigadier H., occupies villages round Almeida, 175 ; endeavours to break up Brennier's retreat from Almeida, 177 ; blamed by Cotton for Brennier's escape, 178 ; probably most to blame, 179 ; Governor of Gibraltar, and suggests holding Tarifa, 331 ; his share of defence of Tarifa, 331-7

Campbell, General Alexander, quits Wellington's service, 341

Campillo, mentioned, 457

Campo Maior, Major Talaya's heroic defence of, 121 ; dismantled beyond repair by Latour Maubourg, 122 ; Beresford's surprise attack, 124 ; retreat of Latour Maubourg, 124 ; combat of, and rout of French, 124-133 ; fortifications repaired, 232 ; Wellington prepares to defend space between, and Elvas, 233 ; De Grey at, in reserve, 234 ; Montbrun pushes forward towards, 235 ; Leith summoned from, to take part against Badajoz, 387 ; Wellington's blame of Light Dragoons induced nervousness among officers, 415 ; Hill to call out Portuguese militia to, if necessary, 446

Campoverde, General, Marquis of, attacks Barcelona, 16 ; retires to Tarragona, 18 ; lands men to strengthen Tarragona garrison, 245 ; quits Tarragona by sea to collect an army of succour, 245 ; his feeble efforts to aid Tarragona, 246 ; retires to Cervera, and decides to abandon Catalonia, 247 ; superseded by Lacy, 248 ; his feebleness disappoints Wellington, 249

Canada, open to invasion from U.S.A., 309 ; Madison raises a force for the conquest of, 322 ; sketch of condition of, and nature of its frontier, 514 ; fighting forces of, 515-16

Canadian militia, ill-behaviour of, 525

Canch, Ensign, mounts walls of castle of Badajoz, 400

Cañizal, Wellington concentrates at, 473 ; mentioned, 475

Canning, George, British statesman, Perceval wishes him to enter his ministry, 3 ; answers criticisms on Palmerston's introduction of army estimates, 4 ; disowns Admiral Berkeley's action in "Chesapeake" outrage, 311 ; refuses American compromise as to embargo, and Orders in Council, 315 ; willing to reopen negotiations with America, 316

Canning, Stratford, young English diplomatist, influences the Porte to make peace with Russia, 287-8

Cantalapiedra, Marmont crosses the Guareña at, 476

Cantalapino, Wellington fails to cross Marmont's line at, 477

Carbonero, Wellington at, 557

Cardeal, Wellington's Third Division at, 267

Carrié, General, captured in fight at Cas-trillo, 475

Carrión river, Wellington throws his army across, 601 ; French passed it at Palencia, 602 n.

Cartana, Ballesteros attacks Maransin at, 381

Carthagena, Napoleon desires Soult to aid Suchet in reducing, 294 ; Soult desires to co-operate with Suchet in siege of, 326 ; threatened through capture of Valencia, 347 ; two British regiments in, 379 ; Ross ordered to aid Maitland from garrison at, 556 ; Cooke in command of troops at, 571

Carvajales, Foy's plan for destroying miscarries, 562

Casal Novo, Ney's retreat to, 79

Casas de Don Antonio, Hill pursues Girard to, 272 ; Hill's Portuguese halt at, 272-3

Casas Viejas, Graham drives out French, 43 ; retreating force cut up, 43

Cash payments, proposal to meet financial crisis rejected by Commons, 5

Casillas de Flores, Wellington orders Seventh Division to, 264

Cassagne, French General, Victor sends him to occupy Medina Sidonia, 43 ; sends information of Spanish strength at Medina Sidonia to Victor, 45 ; demonstration before Allied line at Tarifa, 333

Cassetti, a spy in Murat's pay, 305

Castalla, French at, 565

Castanion, General, sent to join Santocildes, 240 ; assails Valletaux, who is killed, 241

Castaños, Spanish general, joins Beresford at Elvas, 137 ; crosses the Merida, 140 ; strengthened by Colborne's brigade, 142 ; to hold Spanish troops in observation towards Llerena, 143 ; meets Beresford at Almendralejo, and agrees to serve under him, 182 ; Foy to drive him from Truxillo, 256 ; raids d'Erlon's posts, 270 ; with Hill, 270 ; anxious to strike at Girard, 271 ; tells Hill that Girard has retreated, 272 ; strange conduct at Ciudad Rodrigo, 377 ; his proposal as to Ballesteros, 377 ; commanding Army of Galicia, harasses Army of the North, and advances on Astorga, 447 ; orders Santocildes to invest Astorga, 470 ; Wellington tells him he cannot hold his position at Salamanca, 478 ; joins Wellington, 564

Castello Bom, an alternative route of retreat for Wellington from Fuentes, 157

Castello Branco, Allies at, 230 ; cantonment of Wellington's army, 238 ; Wellington has three divisions at, 251 ; Wellington's headquarters at, 253 ; Hill ordered back to, 350 ; Alten retreats to, 416 ; Marmont marches to, and Alten retires from, 417 ; Burgoyne's mission when Marmont reaches, 418 ; Light Division enters, 419 ; evacuated through Alten's misconduct, 423

Castello de Vide, possible turning movement against Wellington through, 232 ; Wellington's Light Division at, 251

Castello Mendo, Carlos d'España at, 267 ; Wellington's winter quarters, 269

Castile, late harvest means no supplies for Marmont, 445 ; Wellington to carry his operations into, 446 ; Wellington adheres to plan to invade, 466

Castlereagh, Robert Stewart, Viscount, Perceval wishes him to enter his ministry, 3 ; Stewart describes the Albuera battlefield to, 212-13 ; becomes Foreign Secretary, 280 ; his ideas concerning Local Militia, 281 ; Wellington's mistake as to his being author of Treaty of Bucharest, 288 ; rejects proposition of peace from Napoleon, 299

Castrejon, Anson's brigade halts at, 473

Castrillo, mentioned, 473 ; Clausel pushes Carrié's brigade over the ford near, 475 ; Clausel driven back by Alten, 475

Castuero, mentioned, 457

Catalonia, French campaign in, 245 ; abandoned by Campoverde, 247 ; far from being subjugated, 248 ; insurrection throughout, aroused by Lacy and his successes, 249 ; the general of the army of, to have no correspondence with Joseph, 295 ; incorporated with France, 296 ; plan of administration, 296 ; French officers refuse to recognise the new civil officials, 297 ; order to be kept in, by Army of the Ebro, 434 ; Maitland sails from, 565

Celada del Camino, Wellington's retreat to, 597 ; mentioned, 598

Celorico, Wellington's winter quarters, 269 ; Trant guards the magazines at, 417 ; panic-stricken rearguard arrives at, 418 ; Wilson destroys magazines at, on arrival of French, 418

Cervera, Campoverde retires to, 247 ; surprised by Lacy, 249

Chambly, Fort of, a supporting post on Canadian frontier, 518

Champagny, Jean Baptiste, Mompère de, Duke of Cadore, his interpretation of the Berlin Decree, 312

Champalimaud, Brigadier de, his regiments in assault on Castle of Badajoz, 396 ; his brigade with Pakenham, 487

Champlain, Lake, necessity for a post of defence there, 518 ; part of waterway to Montreal, 520 ; British naval force superior, 521 ; Americans forming dépôts and building bateaux on, 527 ; Dearborn's delayed advance on, 545

Channel Islands, Napoleon plans a descent on, 257

Charles XIII. (Duke of Sudermania), succeeds the dethroned Gustavus IV. of Sweden, 8

Chatham, mentioned, 310 ; school for sappers and miners established at, under Captain Pasley, 379

Chatham Dockyard, Napoleon plans burning of, 259

Chauncey, Captain Isaac, appointed to American naval command on Lakes Erie and Ontario, 534 ; establishes a naval yard on Lake Erie, 534 ; goes up the Hudson to Sackett's Harbour, 535 ; endeavours to secure American naval superiority on Lake Ontario, 548

Chauvel, General, reaches Pollos with reinforcements, 480

Chemineau, General, sent to assist at Mirabete, retires in disorder to Oropesa, 429 ; seizes bridge at Palencia, 602
 Cherbourg, Napoleon sends regiment from, to Spain, 257
 Chesapeake outrage, Jefferson's attitude, 313
 Chicapierna, a tributary of the Albuera, 183 ; routed French cross, 205
 Chiclana, forest of, Graham's march through, 49
 Chinchilla, Joseph passed through, 559 ; d'Erlon to capture the castle, 593
 Chippewa, a post between Ontario and Erie, 519 ; Brock's strength at, 538 ; Smyth's night fight near, 544
 Chowne, Major-general, once known as Tilsion, rejoins Wellington, 342 ; assails castle of Mirabete, 427
 Ciudad Rodrigo, Drouet leaves three battalions at, in garrison, 31 ; Wellington intends to blockade, 113 ; a convoy enters through Erskine's carelessness, 113 ; suggested serious French movements at, 144 n. ; French entering, 150 ; Marmont throws in a convoy of provisions, 229 ; mischievous effect of destruction of fortifications of Almeida, 230 ; most promising enterprise for Wellington, 251 ; question of Wellington's besieging it, 251 ; blockade of, established, 253 ; Wellington too weak to prevent revictualling of, 258 ; French enter, 259 ; French dragoons routed on westward road, 261 ; Foy creates a diversion while Marmont advances on, 268 ; Sanchez captures the Governor of, during a fray, 269 ; Foy summoned to take part in operations at, 270 ; Napoleon warns Marmont as to consequences if Wellington beleaguers, 292 ; preparations for siege of, completed, 349 ; Wellington orders attack on, 349 ; advance of Wellington towards, 350 ; description of, and fortifications at, 350-52 ; attack of redoubt of Great Teson, 352 ; work in the trenches, 353 ; Thiébault tells Marmont Wellington's intention is to attack, 355 ; Dorsenne discredits the message, 355 ; convent of Santa Cruz taken, 356 ; San Francisco convent attacked, 356 ; assault continued, 357 ; French garrison lays down arms, 363 ; riot and pillage, 363 ; its capture a great feat of arms, 365 ; British and French losses at, 366 ; captured as Wellington received news of Suchet's victory at Valencia, 369 ; garrison at, isolated by flooding of the Agueda, 370 ; Wellington's idea to

bring ordnance from, abandoned, 374 ; necessary to make over to Spanish Government, 377 ; d'Espana's complaints of inability to strengthen, 392 ; condition of, through Spanish procrastination, 411 ; Marmont blockades, 416-17 ; French division left before, 419 ; bridge above, repaired, 420 ; discussion of Dorsenne's responsibility for fall of, 421 ; Marmont's responsibility for fall of, 422 ; strategical value to Wellington, 430-31 ; Marmont has guns, but want of supplies prevents attack on, 445 ; Wellington secures his advanced bases at, 460 ; Wellington's fear for communications with, 478 ; Marmont thinks Wellington has retreated on, 485 ; Marmont thinks to cut off Wellington's communications with, 486 ; supplies gone to, 551 ; cannon shot arrives at Burgos from, 581 ; retreat from Burgos ended at, 621 ; end of campaign of 1812, 623

Claparéde, General, in command of Second Division of French Ninth Army Corps, march into Spain, 31 ; his division to guard Drouet's communications while advancing to Massena's relief, 32 ; cut off from Massena, 32 ; driven back by Trant, 113 ; joins Ferey in storming Fuentes, 168 ; heavy losses at Fuentes, 170 ; his division's extension, 270
 Clausel, General, division at Avila, gathering supplies, 268 ; marches from Upper Tormes to Avila, 348 ; arrives at Avila, 354 ; in cantonments at Avila, 422 ; sent to the Tagus, 429 ; urges Marmont to manœuvre at Salamanca, 463 ; position for battle of Salamanca, 484 ; division becomes reserve in rear, 486 ; commands at Salamanca when Marmont and Bonnet are wounded, 490 ; in entire command of army, 494-8 ; brings off his routed army from Salamanca, 502 ; Marmont's unchivalrous blame of, for defeat at Salamanca, 502 ; defence of, 502 ; brings shattered troops to Arevalo, 550 ; ascends the Pisueña, sending heavy waggons and wounded to Burgos, 551 ; Joseph's desertion of, puzzles Wellington, 552 ; compelled to retire behind the Ebro, 553 ; fails to summons garrisons to join him, 561 ; moves on Valladolid, 562 ; drives Anson to the Douro, occupying Tordejillas and Valladolid, 563 ; withdraws from Dueñas, 563 ; to Margay and Torquemada, 564 ; raids Wellington's communications, 589 ; effect of concerted movement with Joseph, 591 ; reorganises army of Portugal, and cedes

command to Souham, 595 ; supports Soult's proposal to attack Wellington on the Tormes, 612

Cleeve, Major, his German battery supports Alten at Albuera, 191 ; battery taken by Latour Maubourg's lancers, but recovered, 198

Clinton, General Sir Henry, unacceptable to Wellington for Spanish service, 26 ; commands Sixth Division, 460 ; at Salamanca, 496-7, 506, 508 ; falls back to Arevalo, 562 ; might close on Clausel's rear, 564 ; insubordination of, 620

Clinton, General William. Wellington desires his services, but Bentinck claims him, 342

Coa river, Masséna's army cantoned behind it, 99 ; crossed by Allies, 230 ; Wellington chooses the bend of for action, 267 ; Wellington's winter quarters, 269 ; Fifth and Sixth Divisions cross at Almeida, 350 ; Marmont's advance to, 411 ; French abandon Almeida and fall back on, 417 ; flooded, to Marmont's disadvantage, 419

Cochrane, Colonel, repulsed in attack on Reynier's troops, 177

Cocks, Major Charles Somers, afterwards Colonel, commands Stirling's brigade in assault on horn-work at Burgos, 574-5 ; killed in sortie from Burgos, 580 ; testimony to his services, 580

Codrington, Captain, commands British men-of-war at Tarragona, 245 ; declares Tarragona untenable, 246 ; refuses to embark Catalonian troops, 247

Coimbra, Montbrun ordered to repair bridge at, 70 ; held by Trant and Silveira against Montbrun, 74 ; abandoned by Trant, unknown to Montbrun, 80

Colborne, Major John, afterwards Lord Seaton, witnesses rout of French at Campo Maior, 127 ; his indignation when his brigade was halted, 135 ; carries French posts at siege of Badajoz, 145 ; audacious raids, and French dismay in Cordova, 181 ; at Albuera, 191, 196-7 ; mentioned, 204 ; leads attack on Ciudad Rodrigo, and becomes master of the redoubt, 352 ; wounded, 366

Cole, Major-General Hon. George Lowry, sent to Espinhal, thence to Alemtejo, 87 ; ordered to join Beresford at Albuera, 185 ; at battle of Albuera, 188-204 ; quits Spain for Parliamentary duties, 341 ; at Salamanca, 494-5 ; 505-8 ; receives personal orders from Wellington, 509 ; mentioned, 586

Collins, Brigadier, Portuguese brigade drawn up at stream of Albuera, 185 ; his infantry on left for Albuera fight, 188 ; mortally wounded at Salamanca, 506

Colmenar de Oreja, Spaniards in second line at, 606

Colville, General, part of his brigade astride the Ciudad Rodrigo road, 200 ; at storm of Ciudad Rodrigo, 358 ; wounded at Badajoz, 405

Commander-in-Chief Duke of York succeeds Sir David Dundas, 280

Commissariat, failure of, in Wellington's retreat from Burgos, 617, 621

Commissariat mules, supply of in Wellington's army, 344

Commissariat (Portuguese), its inefficiency and Wellington's denunciations, 27

Commissary General, Wellington's Chief Commissary, Kennedy, resigns, 343 ; Bissett succeeds, 344

Condado de Niebla, Blake marches for, 231 ; Blake reported to Soult as marching to, 237

Condeixa, Ney at, 78-9

Congress (American) prohibits imports from France and England, 319 ; authorises war levies, 521 ; remits forfeitures, 548

Connecticut (Governor of), comment on tyranny of Central Government, 316

Conroux, General, in command of 1st Division, marches into Spain, 31 ; d'Erlon takes his division to Leiria, 32 ; at Boica, 70 ; posted at Redinha, 71 ; retreats after Sabugul, 112 ; losses and defeat at Fuentes, 170 ; marches with Soult for Seville, 237 ; Blake retires before him to Cadiz, 243 ; watches Balles-teros at San Roque and Gibraltar, 372

Conscription (in France), Napoleon's draw on, in advance, from 1812-13-14 lists, 10 ; call in 1811, 10 ; idea of in England, 281-2

Constantinople, Stratford Canning our diplomatic agent there, 287

Continental blockade, Napoleon insists on, 284 ; Bernadotte refuses to enforce, 286 ; Russia promises relief of, 286 ; Murat fails to enforce, 289 ; Napoleon increases its rigour, 320

Continental system, European resentment, 6 ; fails to close European ports to England, 8 ; disastrous effects in Russia, 8 ; Napoleon's attitude to Russia regarding this, 9

Contreras, General, in command of Tarragona during Campoverde's absence, 245 ; charged with cowardice, 245

Cooke, General, succeeds Graham at Cadiz, 67 ; Wellington's deputy at Cadiz, 331 ; Campbell usurps command of his troops in Cadiz, 336 ; reports Campbell's action to Wellington, 337 ; embarks a force at Cadiz, 570 ; joins Skerrett at Alcala, 571

Copenhagen, General Brock's service at, under Nelson, 522

Copons, General, in command at Tarifa, 330

Cordova weakened by Soult's call for troops, 182 ; Soult sends sick and stores to, 457 ; d'Erlon's corps through, 592

Cordovillas, Wellington's retreat to, 597, and n.

Coria, Masséna cantons his retreating army at, 93

Corsica : Bentinck recommends occupation of forts in, 306

Cortes, Napoleon ready to hand Spain to Ferdinand or the Cortes if he beats England, 282 ; Joseph empowered to treat with, 298 ; Napoleon proposes Spain to be governed by, 299 ; its orders to Ballesteros, 593 ; supersedes him because of his manifesto, 594 ; gives Wellington supreme command, 594

Coruña, Douglas British commander at, 436 ; Popham sails from, 470 ; Wellington's line of communication with, over bad roads, 588 ; 1st Guards march from, and join Wellington, 602

Cotton, Major-General Sir Stapleton, absent during retreat of Masséna, 115 ; reports enemy having reconnoitered El Bodon in force, 150 ; drives back Montbrun's cavalry, 165-6 ; blames Campbell for Brennier's escape from Almeida, 178 ; in command of force pursuing Soult to Seville, 412 ; ascertains that d'Erlon occupies Llerena in force, 413 ; orders Ponsonby to push into Villagarcia, 413 ; unjustly blames Ponsonby for incompleteness of victory at Villagarcia, 415 ; meets enemy at Rueda, 473 ; his victorious dragoons at Salamanca, 493 ; wounded by a picquet at Salamanca, 499-505 ; his exploit at Salamanca, 507 ; disabled, 551 ; at Venta del Pozo with rearguard, 598-9

Coupiigny, General, Marquis of, supersedes Lapeña, 67

Craig, Sir James, has General Brock as second in command in Lower Canada, 522

Craufurd, Brig.-General Robert, absent during Masséna's retreat, 115 ; returns from England and rejoins at Fuentes, 160 ; ordered to cover Houston's move-

ment across the Turones, 164 ; drives back Montbrun's cavalry, 165-6 ; fails to reach Fuenteginaldo, 264 ; Wellington's rebuke, 264 ; report of forces engaged in attack on the Great Teson, 352, n. ; killed in storming Ciudad Rodrigo, 362 ; his character, 366

Cuelar, Wellington arrives and makes it his headquarters, 552 ; light horse and infantry left at, 557 ; Clinton quits, 562

Cuenca, Foy ordered to, to replace Army of Centre, 347 ; garrison of, captured by guerillas on way to Valencia, 561

Curto, General, his light cavalry on Thomières' outer flank, 484 ; threatens Pakenham's advance at Salamanca, 489

D'Alava, Miguel, Wellington's A.D.C., with him at battle of Salamanca, 487 ; fails to rally Spaniards at Villa Muriel, 603

Dalbiac, Colonel, 127

Dalhousie, Lord, 25 ; mutinous conduct, 620

Dantzig, Napoleon's pretext for increasing the garrison, 9

Danubian Principalities promised to Austria by France, 286

Darmagnac, General, to occupy Talavera, 440 ; to come into touch with Army of South at Audujar, 441 ; ordered to keep his detachment at Talavera, 442 ; his infantry cross the Tormes, 613

Darricau, General, sends reinforcements to Victor, 68 ; left at Llerena to screen Soult's movements, 412

Davoust, General Louis Nicholas, Duke of Auerstadt, Napoleon reinforces his army in Germany, 9 ; Napoleon's letter to, 10 ; ordered by Napoleon to occupy Pomerania, to render blockade effective, 286

Dearborn, General James, selected by America as senior general, 521 ; at Albany, 528 ; assents to Prevost's suggestion for suspension of hostilities, 528 ; despatch saying U.S. Government declined to suspend hostilities, 533 ; his feebleness in Lake Champlain campaign, 545 ; into winter quarters, 545

Decaen, General, in command of Army of Catalonia, 433 ; Suchet concert with, 554

Decken, General, his cavalry's achievements at Garcia Hernandez, and losses, 511-12

De Grey, Colonel Hon. George, brigade of

cavalry joins Cole, 87 ; in reserve at Campo Maior, 234 ; remains in quarters at Villa Viçosa, 238 ; cavalry at Fuente-guinaldo, 264 ; skirmish at Aldea da Porte, 266 ; heavy cavalry's winter quarters about Alverca, 269

De Joncquières, Brigadier, captured by French, 558

De Lancey, Colonel, Deputy Q.M.G., temporarily succeeds Murray as Chief of Staff, 448

Dennis, Captain, meets the American night attack at Queenston, 539 ; joined by Williams, 540 ; compelled to fall back towards Queenston, 541

D'Erlon, Jean Baptiste (Drouet) Count, Marshal of France, assumed himself independent of Masséna's command, but brings Conroux's division to Leiria, 32 ; his arrival widens Masséna's feeding ground, 33 ; disputes Masséna's authority over Ninth Corps, 72 ; wrangle with Masséna, 95 ; withdraws towards Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca, 95 ; recalls Claparéde from Guarda, 95 ; to be engaged by Trant and Wilson in battle of the Coa, 101 ; his corps ordered to Andalusia, 152 ; covers the French rout at Fuentes, 169 ; ordered by Napoleon to join Army of Andalusia, 181 ; joins Soult in Andalusia, 216 ; his army, 231 ; joins Soult at Usagre, 231 ; withdraws to Zafra, Los Santos, and Merida, 238 ; to fill up gap created by Foy's departure for Ciudad Rodrigo, 270 ; cavalry on the Guadiana, about Medellin, 371 ; deceived by Hill's retirement to cantonments, 381 ; report from, of resumption of preparations for siege of Badajoz, 382 ; watched by Graham, 383 ; Wellington desires Graham and Hill to prevent his junction with Foy, 387 ; to strengthen Soult's force, 391 ; left at Llerena to screen Soult's movements, 412 ; Cotton discovers that he occupies Llerena in force, 413 ; retires to Cordova, summoned by Soult, 415 ; in La Serena, 422 ; destitute of provisions, 423 ; reports Hill's advance, 425 ; drives in British outposts at Medellin and Robera, 429 ; reinforced by Soult, 432 ; to be reinforced on the Guadiana, 442 ; asks Joseph for instructions, 443 ; his dilemma, 444 ; ordered to pursue and engage Hill, 451 ; to keep Hill occupied and invest Badajoz, but not to cross the Guadiana, 454 ; his strength, 454, n. ; falls back to Berlanga and Azuaga, 455 ; notes on his caution in dealing with Hill, 455 ; takes up

position along the Sierra de Hornachos, 456 ; falls back from Hornachos, 457 ; rearguard through Velmez, 457 ; makes for Jaen, 457 ; Soult's conduct in exposing him to defeat, 458 ; to be followed by Treilhard, 469 ; troops remitted to Army of South, 592 ; commands Army of Centre, 593 ; replaces bridge of boats at Fuentidueña, 606 ; in command of Army of Portugal on the Tormes, 613

Desgraviers, General, killed at Salamanca, 505

D'Espana, Don Carlos, ordered to join Beresford at Albuera, 185 ; ordered to send one of his battalions to the bridge at Albuera, 194 ; brigade refuses to advance, 202 ; at Castello Mendo, 267 ; intercepts Barrie's letters to Marmont, 355 ; to hinder Marmont, 377 ; to break bridges on the Yeltes and Huebra, 378 ; complains of inability to strengthen Ciudad Rodrigo, 392 ; falls back to Almeida, 416 ; joins Trant, 416 ; fails to break down bridge on the Agueda, 423 ; slackness in revictualling Ciudad Rodrigo, 423 ; crosses the Agueda, 460 ; evacuates Alba de Tormes, 478, 498 ; Wellington's praise of, in spite of his failure at Alba de Tormes, 512

Despeña Perros, Pass of, mentioned, 457 ; a possible route for Joseph, 566 ; Wellington said to be sending troops through the pass into Andalusia, 571

Detroit, possession of, secured to Americans, 520 ; Brock urges Prevost to seize by surprise, 523 ; Hull arrives at, 525 ; plan of attack on, 530 ; attack on Hull's forces, 531 ; Indians cover Brock's left, and Hull retreats to fort, and capitulates, 531 ; Prevost orders evacuation of, 533 ; Brock declines under discretionary instructions, 534 ; Harrison's advance on, 545 ; Americans fritter away their strength at Straits of, 547

Dickson, Major (of Artillery), collects ordnance from Olivença for siege of Badajoz, 143 ; collects siege ordnance from Badajoz, 221 ; carries Wellington's siege-train to Francosa, 252 ; collecting a siege-train at Elvas, 374 ; his dissatisfaction as to guns lent by fleet, 375 ; Napier's comment on his artillery's silence at Salamanca, 508

Digeon, General, his dragoons cross the Tormes, 613

Dilkes's Brigade in the fight for Barrosa Hill, 54-60

Divisional organisation in Wellington's army, 341

Do Amarante, General, to harass Soult in *Tras os Montes*, 378

Dominica, Sir George Prevost, commanding in Canada, served in, 522

Dofia Manuela, the nickname for Lapeña, 62

Don Benito, D'Erlon falls back from, 451

Dorsenne, General, supersedes Bessières, 241; marches with Young Guard on La Bañeza, 241; falls back from Villafanca to Astorga, 242; Foy to concert operations with, 256; co-operates with Marmont at Ciudad Rodrigo, 258; reaches San Muñoz, 259; calls up Thiébault, 263; parts company with Marmont, 268; leaves troops at Salamanca, and in valley of Douro, 269; army to be kept in check by Wellington, 292; Wellington intends to drive him towards the Agueda, 349; ignorant of what was doing at Ciudad Rodrigo, 355; his Young Guard recalled to Valencia, 367; censured by Napoleon for not repressing guerilla bands near Burgos, 372; instructed by Napoleon to delay return of Imperial Guard to France, 373; to send Imperial Guard to Bayonne, 373; distracted by Wellington, 379; question of his responsibility for fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, 421; rejects Joseph's authority, 441; Marmont demands reinforcements from, 443

Dos Casas, a stream on battle ground of Fuentes de Oñoro, 155

Douglas, Colonel Sir Howard, 177; encourages the Guerillas, 436; intervenes to prevent despatch of Spanish troops to South America, 436

Douro river, Wellington orders siege-train to be disembarked on, 252; Dorsenne leaves troops in valley of, 269; position of French army cantoned on, 370; possible movements of Marmont on, 378; dépôt for clothing on the, 379; Souham on the, 380; Trant, Wilson, and Silveira protect the magazines on, 416; Marmont retreats towards, 460; summons to his army to join him there, 460; Marmont retires across, 467; Marmont's army crosses, 473; Joseph and Clauseau cross, 551; Wellington anticipates resistance at, 552; Clinton's feint to cross at Valladolid, 562; Clauseau drives Anson to, 563; crossed by Wellington, 563; mentioned, 602; Wellington not strong enough to hold the line of, 604; Army of Portugal crosses, 608

Doyle, General Charles, declares Tarragona untenable, 246

Dresden, Napoleon leaves Paris for, 433

Dubreton, General, Clauseau leaves him at Burgos, 564; defence of Burgos, 584; losses of Wellington by his sortie, 585; excellence of his marksmen, 587

Duckworth, Colonel, of 48th, killed at Albuera, 201

Dueñas, Clauseau withdraws from, 563; Wellington's right rests on, 601; destroys bridge at, 601

Dumoustier, General, in command of Young Guard in Northern Spain, 240; joins Bessières, 241; strengthens Caffarelli's force, 434

Dundas, Sir David, Commander-in-Chief, resigns, 280

Dunlop, Brigadier James, breaks down in health, 341

Duran, General, destroys Suchet's guns at Tudela, 437; escalades Aranda de Duero, 437

D'Urban, Colonel Benjamin, Beresford's chief staff officer, orders Long to maintain his ground unless hard pressed, 186; moving from Braganza to sever communications between Zamora and Astorga, 447; his Portuguese horse mistaken for French and fired on, 478; successfully attacks French column at Salamanca with Portuguese cavalry, 488; repulsed in charge, 492; with Portuguese horse at Majadahonda, 557; Wellington expresses his opinion of Cocks to, 580

Ejeme, fords discovered at, across the Tormes, 612; French cross by the fords at, 613

Elba, Bentinck recommends occupation of, 306

El Bodon, the combat of, 260-61; Wellington's winter quarters, 269; Light Division at, 350

Elda, Maitland advances to, 565

Elio, Spaniards from, in second line, 606

Elley, Colonel, at battle of Sabugal, 107

Elliott, Lieutenant, ordered to select site for American naval yard on Lake Erie, 534-6; captures the *Caledonia*, 536; effects of his example, 538

El Payo, mentioned, 259; Fifth Division retire from, 265; Foy's slow advance to, 268

El Tenebron, Foy's eagerness to pursue Wellington by, 616

Elvas, Wellington orders signals from, to Badajoz, 37; Wellington at, 144, 216; artillery at, used for siege of Badajoz, 221;

siege-train returns to, 230 ; Allies' army at, 232 ; Wellington prepares to defend space between, and Campo Maior, 233 ; mentioned, 234 ; Hill in command of troops left at, 238 ; Marmont to lay siege to, 292-3 ; Wellington orders stores from Setubal to, 369 ; arrival of guns and ammunition at, increases Soult's anxiety, 371 ; Dickson collecting siege-train at, 374 ; trouble with transport of siege-train to, 376 ; preparedness at, for siege of Badajoz, 382 ; Wellington at, 382 ; artillery from, meets Hill at Merida, 424 ; Soult at, 425 ; provides material for suspension bridge at Alcantara, 431 ; Hill to call Portuguese militia to, if necessary, 446 ; heavy guns brought from, to Salamanca siege, 462

Embargo, the American, effect on American trade, 315 ; repeal of, in America, 316 ; removed by Madison, 317

Empecinado, Diez Martin, guerilla, ordered by Wellington to demonstrate near Madrid to alarm Joseph, 446 ; Guadalajara surrenders to, 561

Encinos de Abajo, Marmont traverses the Tormes by ford at, 479

Erie (Lake), naval station there, 517 ; need of chain of posts between Lakes Ontario and, 519 ; possession of Detroit and Mackinac gave U.S. direct access to, 520 ; British naval force superior, 521, 532

Eroles, Baron de, General, beaten at Altenfulla, 437 ; inflicts heavy defeat in return, 438 ; covers Sarsfield's retreat, 438

Erskine, Mr. David, British Minister at Washington, to reopen negotiations with America, 316 ; Canning rejects his agreement, 317 ; correspondence laid before Parliament, 317

Erskine, Major-general Sir William, at Sabugal, 102, 103, 109 ; his carelessness allows a convoy to enter Ciudad Rodrigo, 113 ; shortcomings, 115 ; blocks the bridge at Barba del Puerco, 175 ; Wellington's anger at Brennier's escape from Almeida, 178 ; his cavalry takes part in Hill's attack on Girard, 273 ; at Almendralejo, 424 ; believes Soult is coming in force, 429 ; Strenowitz, his A.D.C., at Maguilla, 453

Escorial (The), Wellington removes to, from Madrid, 563 ; Hill at, 607 ; Soult's advanced guard at, 608

Esla river, Souham at, 380 ; Santocildes ordered to fall back on the, 562 ; Foy overthrows Spanish guard at passage of, 562

Espeja, one of Masséna's columns advances upon, 153 ; Marmont marches to, 229 ; Dorsenne's cavalry proceeds to, 259 ; First Division marches to, 350

Espinar, Joseph marches to, 550

Estepar, Wellington's retreating cavalry halt at, 597

Estremadura, Spanish army of, Wellington advises that it should hold the line of the Guadiana, 19 ; shattered by Soult at battle of Gebora, 24

Estremadura (Province), the situation in, 25 ; Soult left Mortier in the province, 121 ; Marmont able to concentrate for action in, 238 ; need for Wellington to watch French in, 252 ; Soult meditating return to, to recruit Badajoz, 271 ; Soult and Suchet to combine and march to, 294 ; suggested that Marmont should go there, 377 ; Soult's force in, 382 ; Penne-Villemur and Morillo fall back to, 412 ; journey from Beira to, shortened by the bridge at Alcantara, 431 ; harvest ripening, 445 ; Hill not to prevent D'Erlon from moving across, 446 ; Villemur's reconnaissance to collect harvest of, 451

Estremoz, Beresford finds magazines empty, 138 ; cantonment for Wellington's army, 238 ; Wellington's 4th Division at, 251

Eugène Beauharnais (Viceroy of Upper Italy), reminded by Napoleon of his subordinate position, 7

Exchequer Bills, grant of six millions to settle financial crisis, 5 ; Wellington proposes to use in Spain, 378

Facinas, Lapeña leaves, for night march in sortie at Cadiz, 42

Ferdinand VII. (ex-King of Spain), conditions on which Napoleon might restore Spain to him, 282 ; Castlereagh will not recognise Joseph as King in lieu of, 299 ; makes over his authority to the Hereditary Prince, 305

Ferdinand IV., King of Naples and Sicily, insolent treatment of Bentinck, 301

Ferey, General, at Fuentes de Oñoro, 158-159, 168-70 ; cantonment at Valladolid and Douro, 422 ; to support Foy, 484 ; at Salamanca, 495-8

Figueras (in E. Pyrenees), Suchet hears of its recapture by Spaniards, 17 ; Baraguay d'Hilliers collects troops for its blockade, 17 ; Macdonald begins the siege, 18 ; his plans to capture, 245 ; compelled to surrender through starvation, 248

Fleet (British) before Tarragona, 245 ; at Medas Islands, 249 ; lends guns to

Wellington, 374 ; misunderstanding between, and Wellington, 375 ; *and see* Berkeley, Sir George

Fletcher (Colonel), Commanding Engineer, reports on stores for siege at Badajoz, 144 ; wounded at Badajoz, 386

Foix, Sarsfield levies contributions on town of, 438

Fontiveros, Hill ordered to Alba de Tormes, via, 607 ; Hill's right flank exposed to Soult if he should advance by, 608

Forcalhas, Wellington's retreat by, 265 ; Montbrun and Souham pursue Wellington by, 266

Fort Amherstburg. *See* Amherstburg

Fort Concepcion, near to battle-ground of Fuentes de Oñoro, 156-7 ; d'Espana falls back to, 416

Fort Defiance, General Winchester's column at, 545

Fort Detroit, American post on Strait between Lakes Erie and Huron, 519

Fort Erie, a post between Ontario and Erie, 519 ; British force at, 538 ; Smyth's night fight near, 544 ; Commandant called on to surrender, 544

Fort George, post between Ontario and Erie, 579 ; Brock's headquarters, 524 ; Brock returns to, to await events, 533 ; garrisoned by a detachment of Militia and Indians, 537 ; Brock expects American attempt on, 538

Fort Napoleon, surprised and captured by Hill, 428

Fort Niagara, one of the American chain of posts, 519 ; American force at, 537

Fort Ragusa, fortification to protect bridge of boats at Almaraz, 425 ; captured by Hill, 428

Fort of St. John, on the Richelieu (Canada), head of navigation of Lake Champlain, 518

Fort Schlosser, one of American chain of forts, 519

Fort William Henry, first post above Quebec, 518

Foster (Mr.), sent to Washington as British Minister, 320 ; his neglect in not informing Brock and Prevost of the declaration of war by U.S.A., 524, 529

Four Mile Creek, American force at, 537

Fournier, General, his cavalry advance by Nave de Haver, 160 ; charged by Royals and Fourteenth, 166

Fox, Charles James, succession to Foreign Office, 309

Foy, General Maximilian, sent by Masséna to Napoleon to explain the situation in Portugal, 18 ; conveys Napoleon's letter, superseding Masséna, 179 ; ordered to drive Castaños out of Truxillo, and cross the Tagus to concert with Dorsenne, 256 ; intercepted letter from, 258 ; to demonstrate towards Pass of Perales, 259 ; sent to Toledo, 268 ; summoned from Truxillo to Ciudad Rodrigo, 270 ; to Toledo later, 270 ; passes the Tagus into La Mancha and returns, 347 ; recalled, then ordered to reoccupy La Mancha, 348 ; his insight as to English movements, 348 ; recalled by forced marches towards Valencia, 367 ; cantonments in valley of the Tagus, 370-1 ; pushes forward an advanced guard to Jaraicejo, 380 ; at Talavera, 383 ; troops in cantonments, 422 ; to relieve garrison at Mirabete, 429 ; sends Chemineau to aid in defence of Mirabete, 429 ; anxiety as to Almaraz, 430 ; to create with Joseph a diversion in Valley of Tagus, 440 ; troops released for service with Army of Portugal, 442 ; relieves Mirabete through Hill's retirement, 450 ; recalled by Marmont, 450 ; urges Marmont to manœuvre at Salamanca, 463 ; combats Marmont's proposal to march to Alba de Tormes, 478 ; west of Calvarrasa de Ariba, 481 ; on plateau there, 483 ; confronted by Light Division, 484 ; cut off from the French main body, 496 ; assailed by Wellington's forces, 497 ; fine retreat while covering Clause's flank, 499, 504 ; halts at Garcia Hernandez, 502 ; tribute to Wellington, 502 ; plain speaking upon battle of Salamanca, 502-3 ; goes to observe Aranda de Duero, 551 ; his letter to Clarke, 551 ; sent to rescue posts on the river at Astorga, 562 ; conditions under which he might have been cut off from Clause, 564 ; pushed forward against Palencia, 602 ; repulsed at the bridges at Valladolid, 604 ; declares French eagerness to fight Wellington at Tormes, 616 ; tribute to Wellington's conduct in retreat from Burgos, 624

Framingham, Colonel, mentioned, 252 n.

France, quiet under Napoleon during 1811, 6 ; no great sufferer during Continental blockade, 6 ; threatens war if Turkey makes peace with Russia, 287 ; uneasiness at increasing war claims, 291 ; refuses indemnity to U.S.A. for damage to commerce by her cruisers, 308

Frandoivnez, the rendezvous of Wellington's army in retreat from Rubena, 596 and n.

Franklin, Benjamin, opinion of trade, 314
 Frederick William, King of Prussia, intimidated by Napoleon, 283; hopes for alliance with France and Russia, 283; his double game, 283; Napoleon opens negotiations with, 284; dilemma because of Russia's offers, 284
 Fregenal, Ballesteros beaten at, 142
 Freineda, Wellington's new quarters, 375; Wellington immovable at, 380
 Freire, General, advances from Murcia, eastwards, 243; retreats from Gor on approach of Soult, 243; troops broken up, but rally under Blake, 243; 606
 Freixadas, Wellington's winter quarters, 269
 French Army, how maintained by Napoleon, 10; deterioration of quality of French recruits, 11; commanders know nothing of each other's movements, 216; all orders from Paris, 216; wastage in men and horses on lines of communication, 255
 French Army in Spain, and see under Regiments, French; its vital defect, want of unity in command, 295; re-organised, 296; demoralised condition, 297; troops' pay in arrear, 346; re-organisation of, 433; strength of, 434; purport of its dispositions, 434; insubordination of generals, 443; Foy's comment on bad spirit in, 551; state of affairs after retreat from Salamanca, 552; drunkenness at Pisuerga, 601
French Armies in Spain, viz.:-
 Army of Aragon, reconstituted and reduced, 433; broken up to reinforce Army of the North, 554
 Army of Catalonia, General of, not to have correspondence with Joseph, 295; reduced, but increased later, 433
 Army of the Centre, the milch-cow for feeding other armies, 295; detached to Valencia, 347; strength of, 434; joins Army of Valencia, 565; communications between Marmont and, 587; at Tarancón, 593; strength of, 593 n.; mentioned, 605; its positions before Wellington, 609; added to Soult's command, 613
 Army of the Ebro, Reille in command, 434; duty of, 434; how raised, 437; broken up immediately, 437; broken up to reinforce Army of North, 554
 Army of the North, Wellington's preventive aim concerning it, 239; remodelled, 434; its constitution, 434; harassed by advance of Army of Galicia, 447; Clauseau wishes to re-establish communications with, 550; distraught by guerilla activity, and Popham from sea, 554
 Army of Portugal, independent of Joseph, 295; territory assigned to, 349; Foy's troops for service of, 442; mentioned, 466; reinforced, 576; Wellington puts it out of action, 587; strength of, 595; Souham takes up command of, 595; crosses the Douro, 608; its positions before the British, 609
 Army of the South, d'Erlon to maintain communications between it and Army of Portugal, 270; Wellington discovers its strength, 447; occupied with siege of Cadiz, and guerillas, 554; strength of, 593 n.; mentioned, 605; d'Erlon to follow its movements, 607; pushing on to Madrid, 608; its positions before Wellington, 609; to cross the Tormes, 613
 Army of Valencia, the reconstituted army, if the army is reduced, 433; broken up to reinforce Army of North, 554; joins Army of Centre, 565
 Frenchtown, French Canadians at, urge Winchester to drive away Canadian militia and Indians at, 545; gallant British and Indian retreat, 545; Winchester and his forces surrender, 546-7; brilliant close to Champlain frontier campaign, 546-7
 Frere, General, his division sent to swell the army of the Ebro, 434
 Fuente del Maestre, Soult at, 411; Hill at, 451
 Fuenteguinaldo, Wellington sends troops to, 258; and brings up Fourth Division to, 259; serious operations at, 260; Wellington orders Light Division to, 264; fortified with field works, 265; mentioned, 267; mentioned, 268; Wellington's general success in his operations at, 269; his winter quarters there, 269; Seventh Division occupies, 350; Marmont at, 417; Wellington's headquarters, 423
 Fuente Sauco, Marmont arrives at, and hears of fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, 369; Marmont advancing from, 462
 Fuentes de Oñoro, battle of, 155-175; mentioned, 251; Wellington echeloned army between Fuenteguinaldo and, 259; retreat of Light Brigade, 263; Wellington's general success in his operations at, 269
 Gaetano, carried by assault, 465
 Galician army, 239-40; Dorsenne drives

back, 258; does not oppose Bonnet, 269, 449, 563

Gallegos, Marmont marches to, 229; Wellington's winter quarters, 269; First Division marches to, 350; Wellington's headquarters shifted from, to Freineda, 375

Gardanne, General Claude, Drouet takes over the wreck of his detachment, 31

Gazan, General Honoré, sent by Soult to check Ballesteros, 21; rejoins Soult, 21; at Albuera, 191, 194, 199; wounded at Albuera, 201

Gebora river, Mendizabal defeated at, by Soult, 24; Wellington on heights near, 232; remnants of Castaños' defeated Spaniards, 270

George III., thrown into insanity by death of Princess Amelia, and consequent need for a Regency, 3

George, Prince of Wales and Prince Regent, 4, 280, 611

George (Lake), part of waterway to Montreal, 520

Gibraltar, Ballesteros retires before Soult to, 244; a possible refuge for Ballesteros, 326; offers such refuge to him, 327; resources of, back Ballesteros in his opposition to the French, 337; Conroux watches Ballesteros at, 372; unable to supply Bentinck with ammunition and heavy guns, 447; Bentinck takes specie from, 470; drafts from, at Burgos, sickly, 586

Girard, General Jean Baptiste, at Albuera, 191-197; estimate of his conduct, 210; to close up gap between Tagus and Guadiana, 270; advances to Cáceres, 271; falls back from Aliseda, 272; evacuates Cáceres, to Arroyo Molinos, 272; surprised and beaten by Hill at Arroyo Molinos, 274-5; Napoleon deprives him of his command, 276

Gleichen, Captain von Usslar, charges French at Garcia Hernandez, 500

Glengarry Fencibles, augmented in Upper Canada, 523

Godinot, General, sends reinforcements to Soult, 182; at Albuera, 191-2; estimate of his conduct, 210; advances from Olivenza to Juromenha, 234; blows up fortifications at Olivenza and marches to Valverde, 237; Blake retires before him to Cadiz, 242; ordered to move by Jaen on Soult's right flank and rear, 243; Soult organises flying columns under him, 244; blamed by Soult for Semele's disaster, and commits suicide, 244

Gordon, Colonel Willoughby, to succeed Murray as Wellington's Chief of Staff, 448; a job appointment as Quarter-Master-General, 611; his incapacity during retreat from Burgos, 622

Gough, Major Hugh, afterwards General, in command of Eighty-seventh Regiment, at Barrosa, 57-9; at Tarifa, 331-3

Graham, Major-general Thomas, hears of withdrawal of large force towards Seville, 19; consents to join Lapeña in a sea sortie from Cadiz, 40; organisation of his sortie force from Cadiz, 41; sends Twenty-eighth Regiment to drive French out of Casas Viejas, 43; remonstrates with Lapeña and insists on change of direction, 44-5; protests against being ordered to Bermaja, 48; follows track of Lardizabal's guns through forest of Chiclana, 49; learns of Spanish retreat from Barrosa Hill, 52; regains possession of the hill, 53-56; indignation at Lapeña's conduct, 65-67; resigns and joins Wellington, 67; Wellington's desire to substitute him for Spencer at Agueda, 217; sends British reinforcements to Tarragona, 246; mentioned, 251; in command at Penemacor, and relieves Spencer, 253-4; operations on Portuguese frontier, 259-266; beginning to break down in health, 341; marches from Valverde and Zafra to watch for d'Erlon and Soult, 383; urged by Wellington to delay Foy's junction with d'Erlon, 387; recalled to Villa Franca and Zafra to hinder Soult's advance, 391; to bespeak rations at Zafra for army, and spread reports of Wellington's coming, 412; at Portalegre to prevent French dash on Badajoz, 424; marches into Badajoz, 429; ordered home because of eye disorder, 448; at Salamanca, 474; returns in ill-health to England, 471

Granada, Soult reaches, 243; occupied communication between, and Seville cut, 411; Soult compelled to keep a garrison at, 445; Soult making for, 457; Soult contemplates march to, 566; Soult's passage through, on retreat from Cadiz, 571; mentioned, 592; Ballesteros halts at, 594

Granja, cavalry action at, 451

Grant, Colquhoun, Colonel, his capture and escape, 448

Gray, Lieutenant-colonel, of Thirtieth, killed in capture of Badajoz, 405

Greater Teson, a ridge at Ciudad Rodrigo, 351; redoubt captured by Colborne, 352; attacked by French, 353; new battery on, completed, 357

Grenville (Lord, Foreign Secretary), his part in negotiating Jay's Treaty, 307

Greville, General, his fine work at Salamanca, 507

Guadalquivir river, Blake falls back to entrenchments behind, 277

Guadarrama, Joseph's march to Espenar, at foot of, 550; Joseph retires towards passes of, 552; Wellington at, 557; mentioned, 568; Hill takes route by the, 605; and crosses the pass, 607

Guadiana river, bridged by Beresford, 137; in flood, destroys Beresford's bridge, 144; bridge restored, 144; crossed by Wellington and Blake, 231; Soult and Marmont reconnoitre in force, 234; sickness of British troops on, 258; d'Erlon sends Girard to close up space between this and Tagus, 270; d'Erlon's cavalry on, 371; pontoon and flying bridges thrown across by Wellington, 382; d'Erlon's division cantoned along, 422; d'Erlon's troops on, to be reinforced, 442; Hill retires to, 457

Guarda, Claparéde joined here by the Second Corps, 92; French Eighth Corps at, 95-6; Wellington's winter quarters, 269; Trant's march towards, 417

Guareña river, mentioned, 456; race of French and Cotton for, 473

Guerillas, Suchet's failure to crush them, 16; bands in Northern Spain, 240; flood the province about Salamanca, 241; worry French garrisons, 242; bands harass Marmont, 254; increased activity, 371; their course hinders Marmont, 377; leaders distract Suchet up to the gates of Valencia, 380; rearrangement of French armies to crush, 434; successes in various quarters, 436-7; their chequered experiences, 439; depredations up to Madrid's gates, 444; active, 553; hamper Caffarelli, 554; successes, 561; possibility of havoc at isolated posts, 569; driven back by French during Wellington's retreat, 598

Guingret, Captain, calls for volunteers to swim river to storm tower at Tordesillas bridge, 604-5

Guipuzcoa, Campillo and his guerillas against French in, 437

Gurwood, Lieutenant, leads forlorn hope at Ciudad Rodrigo, 359; receives Barrié's, sword, 363

Gustavus IV., dethroned in Sweden, 7

Gustavus van der Decken, charges Seventy-sixth of French line, and wounded, 500

Guzman's, castle and tower of, in Tarifa, 329-30, 332

Habert, General, commands a division of Army of Valencia, 433

Habsburg, House of, Archduke of, conspires to shake off French yoke in Sardinia, 301; plan to marry into House of Carignan, 302

Halkett, Colonel Colin, his German battalions remain with Cotton, 597-8; joins Bock near the Arlanza, 598; French attack him at the river, but are driven back, 599; creditable conduct of his troops at the Arlanza, 601

Haltorf, Captain, charges at Garcia Hernandez, 500

Hamilton, General, at Albuera, 185-212; in the woods opposite Torre de Mouro, 233; remains at Villa Viçosa, 238; Soult believes he has landed troops at Lisbon, 381; protects bridges thrown across the Guadiana, 383

Hardenberg, Karl August, Prince von, hopes for Russian concessions to Prussia, as to Poland, 283; envoy of king to Paris, seeking concessions, 283

Hardinge, Colonel, at Albuera, 203, 204, 211

Hardy, Sir Thomas, captain of the fleet, slow to send appropriate guns to Dickson, 375; sends cannon from a Danish frigate, 376

Harispe, General, commands a division of Army of Valencia, 433

Harrison, General, succeeds Hull, and advances on Detroit, occupying Upper Sandusky, 545; marches to Maumee Rapids, 546

Harvey, General, his brigade takes part in Cole's advance, 204; wounded at Badajoz, 405

Hawker, Lieutenant-colonel, Samuel, his cavalry ordered to turn enemy's left at Pombeiro and Arganil, 89; his inefficiency, 115; Wellington's scathing criticism, 115 n.; his battery joins Beresford at Badajoz, 144

Head, Colonel of Thirteenth L.D.; fine conduct at Campo Maior, 126-133

Hedderwick, Captain, carries the old breach at Burgos, 579

Herrera de Duero, ford of the Douro, used by Wellington, 563

Hill, Major-general Rowland, departure for England, 29; his command transferred to Stewart, then to Beresford, 29; absent during Masséna's retreat, 115; supersedes Beresford at Badajoz, 221; arrives at Almendralejo, 221; commands between Campo Maior and the Caia, 233; commands troops in vicinity of Elvas, 238; watching French corps in

Estremadura, 270 ; desires to join Cas-taños and strike at Girard, 271 ; his march from Portalegre, 271 ; night attack on Girard, at Arroyo Molinos, 273-5 ; his light losses, 276 ; pursues Rémond, 276 ; German commendation of his conduct, 276 ; Wellington recommends for the Bath, 277 ; returns home wounded, but resumes duty, 341 ; ordered to fall back from Estremadura to his former position, 350 ; to destroy bridge over the Tagus, 369 ; Soult nervous at his movements, 371 ; reports road to Almaraz impossible, 375 ; project postponed, 375 ; advances on Merida and Almendralejo to watch Marmont, 383 ; twice prevents convoys entering Badajoz, 385 ; Wellington urges him to delay Foy's junction with d'Erlon, 387 ; recalled to Merida to hinder Soult, 391 ; falls back on Talavera la Real, 393 ; Wellington's instructions to, as to bridge at Almaraz, 424 ; crosses the Guadiana, and thence to Jarachejo, 425 ; measures for reaching Almaraz, 427 ; destroys the bridge, 429 ; retires to Truxillo, 429 ; to be confronted by d'Erlon, 442 ; his positions hazardous, 447 ; retires to Merida, 450 ; obtains knowledge of d'Erlon's orders, and strengthens himself, 451 ; headquarters at Zafra, 453 ; retires to Albuera, 454 ; his strength there, 454 ; notes on his caution in dealing with d'Erlon, 455 ; establishes himself at Llerena, 456 ; ordered to cross river at Almaraz, 457 ; commended for self-restraint, 457-8 ; movements, 469 ; followed by d'Erlon to Castile or Andalusia, 469 ; harasses Army of South, 554 ; his strength, 566 n. ; ordered to pass the Tagus at Almaraz, 571 ; at Talavera and Toledo, 571 ; to cover Madrid between Toledo and Fuentidueña, 593 ; reports enemy's advance, 594 ; announces that he must retreat before Joseph and Soult, 595 ; warned of Wellington's delicate situation, 604 ; able to take route by the Guadarrama and Villacastrin, 605 ; secures bridges of Bayona and Puento Larga, 606 ; ordered westwards, 607 ; carries his army over the Tormes at Alba, 608

Hinde, General, 496

Hoghton, Major-general, at Albuera, 199-200

Holcroft, Captain (of Artillery), menaces the river near Queenston, 541 ; cannonade holds back American boats, 542

Holland, restless under Napoleonic subjugation, 6 ; Louis Bonaparte compelled

to abdicate throne of, by Napoleon, 7 ; Napoleon's comment on dear supplies, 255 ; resentment against Napoleon's interdiction of commerce, 291

Hope, General John, commands Seventh Division, 460

Hopkins, Captain, and Forty-third Regiment, heroic conduct at Sabugal, 107

Hormaza river, French cavalry overtake Wellington's rearguard at, 598

Hornachos, d'Erlon falls back from, 457

Hornillos, part of Wellington's army bivouacs at, 597

Houston, Major-general William, in command at Pinhancos, 98 ; in Poço Velho, 160 ; at Fuentes de Oñoro, 160-166 ; character of his force, 174 ; calls for volunteers for assault on San Cristobal, 223 ; storms the castle at Badajoz, and retires with heavy loss, 224 ; home on leave, and not expected to return, 341

Howard, General, takes part in Hill's attack on Girard, 273 ; his brigade in the fight at Arroyo Molinos, 274-5 ; with Hill, 424 ; brigade's movements to capture castle of Mirabele, 426 ; in contact with Soult at Alba de Tormes, 609

Hudson river, waterway to Montreal, 520

Huebra river, d'España to break bridges on, 378

Huelva, Ballesteros reinforced by Blake, 140 ; Skerrett lands at, 570 ; Wellington crosses the, and fights on east side of, 618

Huerta, Marmont commands ford of, 464 ; traverses the Tormes by the ford at, 479 ; Wellington pursues Foy to, and crosses the Tormes at, 499 ; mentioned, 609 ; Jourdan proposes to cross Tormes at, 612

Huescar, Soult's retreat on, 592

Hull, Brigadier-general William, chosen for command by U.S.A., 521 ; reaches Maumee, unapprised of declaration of war, 525 ; his schooner with stores captured, 525 ; arrives at Detroit, and occupies Sandwich, 525 ; receives no intimation of Dearborn's consent to suspend hostilities, 528 ; communications harassed by Proctor, 530 ; withdraws to American territory, 530 ; capitulates to Brock at Detroit, 531 ; his trial by court-martial, 532 ; succeeded by General Harrison, 545

Hulse, General Richard, drives Waithier across the Azava, 260 ; joins Wellington, 342 ; at Salamanca, 496 ; losses in his brigade, 507

Huron (Lake), on U.S. frontier, 519

Ibeas, Bock to cross the Arlanzon by bridge of, 596
 Igualada, Lacy seizes, 249
 Imaz, Brigadier-general, succeeds Menacho in defence of Badajoz, 38
 Impressment on High Seas, Britain claims right to impress British sailors from foreign ships on high seas, 307 ; revival of trouble by Jefferson, 308
 Indians (North American), aid necessary to Britain to hold Upper Canada, 520 ; American advantage, 520 ; show excellent spirit, 522 ; tampered with by U.S., 524 ; a tribe fails to join Brock, 526 ; dangers from, if Brock quits Detroit, 534
 Inglis, Colonel William, gallant leading of the 57th, wounded, 200 ; fine conduct at Albuera, 213
 Invasion of England, Napoleon's preparations at Boulogne, 257 ; Napoleon's orders for the descent, 291
 Iremonger, Colonel, his failure at Almeida, 177-9
 Jackson, Mr. Frederick, arrives at Washington to treat on same terms as Erskine, 317 ; Madison picks a quarrel with him, 317
 Jaen, weakened by Soult's call for troops, 182 ; d'Erlon making for, 457 ; d'Erlon's corps pass through, 592
 Jaraicejo, Foy pushes advanced guard forward to, 380 ; Hill reaches, 425 ; Hill halts at, 426 ; mentioned, 571
 Jarama, spanned by a bridge which Hill secures, 606 ; Soult fails to meet Hill at, 607
 Jay's treaty, for commerce between America and England, 307
 Jefferson, Thomas, 3rd President of U.S., his hatred of England, 307 ; chooses Madison as Secretary of State, 308 ; authorises renewal of negotiations, 311 ; demands redress for the "Chesapeake" outrage, 311 ; demands abandonment of search, 311 ; submits a bill to Congress to lay embargo on all foreign-bound vessels, 313 ; attitude as to Orders in Council, and Milan Decrees, 313 ; wanton rejection of settlement, 324 ; realises advantage of U.S. on Canadian frontier, 521
 Jerome Bonaparte (King of Westphalia), his luxury and display, 7
 Jones, Lieutenant-colonel John, wounded at Burgos, 579
 Joseph Bonaparte (titular King of Spain), his views of sovereignty differ from Napoleon's, 7 ; complaints of disobedience of Napoleon's generals, 13 ; his threat to abdicate, 14 ; Napoleon's concessions regarding Spain, 14 ; throws obstacles in Marmont's way, 254 ; Napoleon wishes him to abdicate, 282 ; some of his demands refused by Napoleon, 295 ; curtailment of his military authority, and his protests, 295 ; threats of resignation, 296 ; contemptuous treatment by Napoleon's officers, 297 ; again threatens abdication, 298 ; share of responsibility for fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, 421 ; committal of chief command in Spain to, 433 ; strength after rearrangement of French armies in Spain, 434 ; his ignorance of his own or enemy's strength and position, 439 ; ordered under conditions to join Foy and create diversion in valley of Tagus, 440 ; Marmont alone answers his inquiries, 441 ; want of supplies and transport, 442 ; renewed insubordination of generals, 443 ; his despair, 444 ; joining Soult and d'Erlon, 457 ; consideration of Soult's attitude towards, 458 ; vainly urges Soult to reinforce Marmont, 469 ; requests Caffarelli and Suchet to reinforce Marmont in vain, 469 ; decides to evacuate New Castile and join Marmont, 472 ; letters to Marmont intercepted, 472 ; marching for the Tormes, 480 ; fixes headquarters at Blasco Sancho, 550 ; marches to Segovia, 550 ; orders Soult to evacuate Andalusia and go to Toledo, 551 ; advances to Blasco Sancho towards passes of the Guadarrama, 552 ; clamorous for one of Suchet's divisions, 554 ; evacuates Madrid, 557 ; his blunders on retreating, 561 ; Soult appeals to him to bring his army to Andalusia, 566 ; retires to Valencia, 571 ; his retreat not followed up, 588 ; effect on, if Wellington had taken up a position at Aranda de Duero, 591 ; his patrols in touch with Soult, 592 ; orders Souham not to engage in a general action, 595 ; his advance against Wellington, 605-8 ; strength of his combined army confronting Wellington, 609 ; adds Army of the Centre to Soult's command, 613 ; perplexity at Wellington's retreat, 616 ; his incompetency as a general, 624 ; blames Soult and his brother Pierre, 624
 Jourdan, Marshal Jean Baptiste, becomes chief of staff under Joseph, 14 ; appointed Chief of Joseph's staff, 297 ; his difficulties, 442-4 ; Soult's attitude as to Joseph being Commander-in-Chief instead of, 458 ; explains Joseph's omissions at Madrid and elsewhere, 561 ; opinion as to opening com-

munications with Army of Portugal, 592; proposes crossing the Tormes between Huerta and Villagonzalo, 612; counsel for dealing with Wellington during his retreat from the Tormes, 616; ill-temper at Joseph's conduct of the campaign of 1812, 624

Junot, General Andoche, advises Masséna to await Mortier's arrival, 34; Wellington decides to attack him at Rio Mayor, 35; moves to Chão de Maçãas, 36; ordered to fall back to Soure, 70; to throw his division across the Mondego, 71; ordered to leave a division before Condeixa, 77; to send another to strengthen Loison at Fonte Cuberta, 78; ordered to fall back to Moita, 90; his hurried retreat, 91 n.; at Celorico, 92; marches to Belmonte, 95; reports starving state of his troops, 96; retreats to Urgeira, 99; retreat to Carpio and Marialva after Sabugal, 112; returns home, 227

Juromenha, Beresford bridges the Guadiana at, 137; Kemmis instructed to pass through, 185; Blake crosses the Guadiana at, 231; mentioned, 234; Blake crosses the Guadiana at, 242

Kemmis, Colonel James, instructions from Beresford, 185; at Albuera, 204

Kempt, General James, joins Wellington, 342; attacks Picurina (at Badajoz), 388-90; in the assault on the castle, 396-7; wounded, 405

Kennedy, Commissary General, resigns, 343; his extra labour when he returns, 610

King, Major, in command on Tarifa Island, 330; in Council of War as to Tarifa, 331; reports Skerrett's intention to abandon Tarifa, 332

King of Rome, baptized in Paris, 295

Kingston, most important port on the Upper Canadian boundary, 519; an alternative route for Americans to Montreal, 520; country must be evacuated as far as, if Prevost does not seize Detroit and Mackinac, 523; Brock's forces scattered from, to St. Joseph's, on declaration of war, 524; small reinforcement for garrison at, 527; Brock at, 533; Prevost favours abandonment of, 534

Knipe, Captain, his death, 167

Kutusov, Russian General, defeats Turks at Rustchuk, 287; negotiations for peace independent of Europe, 287

La Anaya de Alba, 613

La Bañeza, Cabrera sent to, by Wellington, 240; Cabrera opposes Serras at, 241; Foy at, 562

La Caridad, 350

La China (Madrid), stormed by Wellington, 560

La Chine, rioters at Montreal seize the King's boats at, 527

La Cordosera, Hill halts at, after a march in storm, 271

La Cueva Pass, opposing difficulty to Hill, 426; Hill descends the pass, 427; and retires to the pass after fight at Almaraz, 429

La Cuquera, mentioned, 483

Lacy, General, supersedes Campoverde, and withdraws to Solsona, 248; his raids into France, 248-9; annihilates French detachment near Reuss, 339; his total defeat at Altafulla by Matthieu, 339

La Encina, a road leading to Fuenteguinaldo, 260; Light Division at, 350

Lake Champlain frontier, Dearborn's feebleness, 545; Americans fail to attempt active operations on, 547

Lallemand, General, falls into Cotton's trap, 413; rout of, 414; beats Slade at Maguilla, 451; attacks and routs Penne-Villemur's cavalry, 455; his dragoons beaten at Ribera, 456

La Mancha, Foy enters, 347; communications cut between Seville and, 411; Jourdan cancels instructions respecting, 442; Army of the South avoiding, 457

Lamarque, General, harassed by Milans, 438

Lamego, Wellington's siege train taken to, 252; Trant, Wilson, and Silveira march to, 416; Bacellar at, 418

La Merced, one of the forts of Salamanca, 461; cannonaded, 465

Lamotte, General, deprived of his command by Ney, 88; captured in French cavalry charge at Fuentes, 162

Lapeña, General (Spanish), decides on a sea sortie from Cadiz, 40; his part in the campaign and battle of Barrosa, 42-52; fails to take advantage of French retreat, 67; his possibilities if more enterprising, 68

La Prairie, on the St. Lawrence, 518

Lardizabal, General (Spanish), in command of vanguard in sea sortie from Cadiz, 43; repelled in his attack on Villatte, 48; commands one of Blake's divisions at Albuera, 188, 191-3

Larpent, Francis Seymour, sent to Spain as Judge-Advocate-General, 449

Las Rozas, fight at, 557-9

Las Torres, occupied by Bradford's Portuguese and d'España's Spaniards, 484

La Tour, Count, meets Bentinck at Palermo, 301; plan for releasing Sardinia from France, 301

Latour-Maubourg, General Marie Charles, Comte de, marches from Badajoz to Alburquerque, 121; removes guns from Campo Maior to Badajoz, 122; affair of Campo Maior, 123-4; his losses, 136; loses opportunity of frustrating Beresford at Juromenha, 137; falls back from Badajoz to Llerena, 138; evacuates Llerena, 141; leaves Constantina to join Soult, 182; at Albuera, 197; drives back pursuing Spaniards, 218; begins fight at Usagre, 219; fords the Guadiana, 234; encounters German Hussars and British Dragoons, 235; ill-advised charge, and capture, 235; in Andalusia, 372

La Trinidad (Badajoz), assault on bastion, 393-5

Le Cor, Colonel, at Castello Branco, 417

Lefebure, British artillery officer, reinforces Beresford at Badajoz, 144-5; a troop of his horse artillery to rear of centre at Albuera, 188; artillery duel with French at Usagre, 219

Leith, Major-general Sir James, absent during retreat of Masséna, 115; rejoins Wellington, 342; summoned from Campo Maior to invest San Roque, 387; his division brought to Cerro del Viento, 393; makes false attack on Pardaleras, 395; the Fifth Division at Badajoz, 402, 408, 409; disposition of Fifth Division at Salamanca, 490-1; wounded, 494; his fall accounted for, 508; receives personal orders from Wellington, 509; mentioned, 586

Le Marchant, General, joins Wellington, 342; supports Ponsonby's Light Dragoons in pursuit of Soult, 412; at Los Santos, 413; supports Graham at Salamanca, 464; aids Cotton, 473; his charge and death at Salamanca, 492-3, 507, 511

Le Mesurier, Trant goes to his assistance, 416; his sortie from Almeida, 417

Lepic, General, refuses to charge without orders from Bessières, 163; his brigade advances across the Azava with Wathier, 259

Lerida, Macdonald's march on, 16; ambuscaded, 16; Lacy harasses French line of communications between, and Barcelona, 249; explosion of magazine at, 554

Lery, General, absurd complaint of Graham's conduct, 65

Lestrade, Colonel, fine conduct at Albuera, 213

Leval, General Jean François, at Barrosa, 45, 56-9; succeeds Sebastiani, 243; too weak to withstand Freire, 243; his danger causes Soult to move on Granada, 243; closes in on Spaniards from Malaga, 327; joins Pécheux, 328; orders assault of Tarifa, 332; protests against renewed attack on Tarifa, 334; occupies Granada and Malaga, 371

Lewiston, American force at, 537

Lisbon, Wellington orders up fresh artillery from, 216; Beresford arrives to organise Portuguese military departments, 220; aim of Army of the North to force Wellington back to, 239; American ships at, demand payment for corn in money, 342; Hamilton supposed to have landed troops at, 381

Lissa, Bentinck occupies, 306

Little Teson, a ridge at Ciudad Rodrigo, 351, 356

Liverpool, Robert Jenkinson, 2nd Earl of, Secretary for War, promises Wellington reinforcements, 26; Wellington's criticisms, 27; complains to Wellington of war expenditure, 117; mentioned, 217 n.; declines to quit War Office for Castle-reagh, 280; right in endeavouring to prevent war with U.S., 529; Wellington's report to, as to shortage of guns, etc., at Burgos, 584

Llera, mentioned, 451

Llerena, Castaños to hold troops in observation at, 143; Colborne harasses French posts at, 145; Soult carries his wounded to, 218; Soult falls back to, on hearing of fall of Badajoz, 411; Soult abandons, 418; Penne-Villemur's reconnaissance from, 451; Spaniards occupy, 453; Hill at, 456

Loison, General Louis Henri, Comte, retreats to Thomar, 36; at Ancião, 70; supersedes Ney, who remonstrates with Masséna, 94; fails to attack Picton, 98; disorderly retreat to Pega and Rapoula, 99; attacked by British cavalry, 99; retreat to heights before Ciudad Rodrigo, 112; unaccountable inactivity at Fuentes, 163; returns home, 227

Long, General, ordered to threaten French line of retreat from Campo Maior, 124; rout of French, 124-33; Heavy Brigade fails to come up, and flight of Portuguese, 128; comments on his behaviour at Campo Maior, 133; reconnoitres at Los Santos, 140; falls back to Santa Marta, Beresford thinks, with unjustifiable haste, 182; ordered to repair to Albuera, 182; at Albuera, 186, 189; blamed for charging Latour-Maubourg, 235; remains in

quarters at Villa Viçosa, 238 ; brigade delayed by bad roads and darkness in Hill's surprise attack on Girard, 274 ; cavalry meets enemy cavalry at Belmonte, 606

Longa (guerilla chief), attacks Valladolid, 241 ; boundless activity, 242

Long Point, Brock marches to, and starts for Amherstburg, 529

Lora del Rio, Soult's artillery crosses Guadaluquivir at, 411

Lorca, wreck of Freire's and Mahy's armies reassembling at, 372

Los Barrios, Barrois moves on, 327-8

Los Santos, Beresford's advanced guard halts at, 140 ; Soult at, 231 ; d'Erlon withdraws to, 238 ; Le Marchant at, 413 ; Hill at, 451 ; mentioned, 453

Louis Bonaparte (brother of Napoleon), compelled to abdicate the throne of Holland, 7

Louisiana, France supports Spain against U.S. in adjustment of boundaries of, 308

Loy, Spanish cavalry on right flank at Albuera, 188

Lumley, Brigadier-general, Sir William, invests Badajoz on north of river, 145 ; supersedes Long in cavalry command, 186 ; at Albuera, 193-4, 198, 204 ; at Usagre, 218 ; beats Latour-Maubourg at Usagre, 219

Lusitanian Legion, takes part in Cole's advance at Albuera, 204

M'Carthy, Lieutenant, guides Picton's column to attack on the castle at Badajoz, 396

Macdonald, Marshal, Etienne, D. of Tarento, deprived of portion of his command to strengthen Suchet, 16 ; severe losses on march to Barcelona, 16 ; appeals to Suchet to aid in recapture of Figueras, 17 ; Suchet's refusal, 17 ; purposes to recover fortress of Figueras, 245 ; Suchet restores communications with, 248

Macdonald, Colonel, at Los Rozas, 557

Macdonell, John, Canadian Attorney-General, rallies Williams' company at Queenston, 541 ; killed, 541

Macfarlane, General, Wellington desires his services, but Bentinck claims him, 342

M'Grigor, Dr., orders Graham home because of eye disorder, 448 ; principal medical officer, and praised by Wellington, 512

Mackie, Lieutenant, forlorn hope, 359

Mackinac (Fort), American post on Lake Michigan, 520 ; possession of, secured adherence of Indians to America, 520 ; Brock urges Prevost to seize by surprise, 523 ; Brock orders Captain Roberts to capture, 524 ; capture, 525

Mackinnon, Colonel, to pass through breach at Santa Cruz convent (Ciudad Rodrigo), 359 ; killed by explosion of French magazine, 361

Macleod, Colonel, alone keeps the Forty-third together in sack of Ciudad Rodrigo, 364 ; killed in capture of Badajoz, 405

M'Mahon, General, at Rapoula, 267

Macotera, Army of Centre at, 609

Madden, Sir George Allan, with Portuguese cavalry at Merida for siege of Badajoz, 145 ; his brigade at Junça, 175-6 ; summoned from Talavera la Real, 187 ; his cavalry on the left, 234 ; at Minxella, 267

Madison, James, fourth President of U.S., hatred of England, 307 ; his theory, that England could be subdued by commercial restrictions, 307 ; prohibits importation of British manufactures in U.S., 308 ; sends William Pinkney to negotiate between England and U.S., 309 ; attitude in negotiations with Rose, 314 ; becomes President, 316 ; seeks to reopen negotiations, 316 ; proclaims removal of embargo and restoration of commerce with England, 317 ; dismay when Erskine's letters are laid before Parliament, 317 ; renew negotiations, 318 ; orders French men-of-war to be admitted to American ports, but British excluded, 320 ; his bill for prohibiting all imports from British Empire, 320 ; raises a force for conquest of Canada, 322 ; his attitude in matter of war with England discussed, 324 ; Napoleon's tool, 325 ; his prohibition of trade with England creates dearth of specie, 342

Madrid, d'Erlon at, 231 ; open to Wellington, 432 ; starvation in, 444 ; Joseph leaves, and endeavours to return, 550 ; Joseph at, 552 ; Joseph evacuating, 557 ; Wellington enters and recaptures stores, etc., 560 ; consideration of the effects of capture, 589 ; Wellington's advance on, a mistake, 591 ; to be covered by Hill, 593 ; Soult's advanced guard at, 608

Mahon, Bentinck sends armament to, 555

Maitland, General Thomas, commands troops in Sicily, 304 ; his disquietude at Bentinck's departure, 304 ; Bentinck sends him to East Spain after depleting his army, 555 ; detained at Palermo, thence to Minorca, 556 ; calls on Roche

to join him at Alicante, 556 ; not to leave coast without Government's instructions, 557 and n. ; sails from Catalonia, and proceeds towards Valencia, 565 ; turns to Alicante, 565 ; Valencia open to him if Joseph had called for Suchet, 591

Majadahonda, affair of cavalry at, 557-8

Malaga, Leval closes in on Spanish army from, 327 ; Barrois cut off from, by floods, 328 ; occupied by Leval, 371 ; mentioned, 381 ; communications with Seville cut, 411 ; Rey falls back to, 412 ; Soult compelled to keep garrison at, 445

Malhada Sorda, Wellington's possible route of retreat from Fuentes, 157

Malpartida, Burne's brigade here to watch the road to Barba del Puerco, 175 ; mentioned, 272

Manners, Major, to support storming party at Ciudad Rodrigo, 359

Manzanilla, Murgeon engages enemy rear-guard at, 570

Maransin, General, attacks Zayas, 141 ; hunts down Ballesteros at Fregenal, 142 ; wounded at Albuera, 201 ; attacked by Ballesteros at Cartania, 381 ; goes to Rey's aid at Malaga, 412

Marchand, General Jean Gabriel, Comte, in rear of Machados, 70 ; desperate at Fuentes de Oñoro, 159-63 ; lack of usual *élan* at Fuentes, 173 ; returns home, 227

Marcognet, General, at Pombal, 70 ; posted at Condeixa, 71

Marialva, French force the bridge over the Azava at, but driven back, 150 ; one of Masséna's columns advances on, 153 ; Wellington constructs trestle bridge over the Agueda at, 349 ; bridge swept away by flood, 370

Marie Louise (Archduchess), marriage to Napoleon, 7

Marlborough (John, Duke of), Wellington compared to, by Foy, after Salamanca battle, 502

Marmont, Aug. Fréd. Louis Viesse de, Duc de Ragusa, Marshal of France, super-sedes Masséna in command of army in Portugal, 179 ; French army withdrawn towards Salamanca, 179 ; Spencer's instructions if Marmont advanced, 217 ; retires to Salamanca to reorganise his army, 217 ; drastic measures to restore discipline, and reorganisation of army, 227 ; shortage of money and transport, and his hindrances, 228 ; advances to Ciudad Rodrigo, 228-9 ; meets Soult at Merida, 231 ; severity of his march at Almaraz, 231 ; protests against Soult's desire to return to Seville, 237 ; withdraws to valley of Tagus, 238 ; Wellington breaks his combination with Soult, 242 ; waiting to follow Wellington into Andalusia, 251 ; Wellington guards against north-west movement of, from Plasencia, 253 ; his difficulties in Spain, and want of supplies, 254 ; interception of his drafts and convalescents, 255 ; shifts headquarters to Plasencia, 256 ; Wellington's movements to frustrate, 258 ; advances on Fuenteguinaldo, 259 ; marches over Sierra de Gata, 259 ; calls Thiébault from Ciudad Rodrigo, 262 ; strength of his army in front of British lines, 264 ; fails to profit by Wellington's perilous position ; retreats, but counter-marches on hearing of Wellington's retirement, 266 ; declines to attack Wellington on the Coa, 267 ; his fictitious report to Napoleon, 268 ; Foy fails to serve, 269 ; to lay siege to Elvas, 292 ; warned as to Wellington beleaguered Ciudad Rodrigo, 292 ; response, 293 ; orders Foy to move from Toledo, 347 ; sends 12,000 men to Valencia, 347 ; follows Montbrun to Cuenca, 348 ; receives Napoleon's final orders, 349 ; in no haste to reach Ciudad Rodrigo, 350 ; throws siege-train in Ciudad Rodrigo, 351 ; retires to the Douro in obedience to Napoleon's orders, 355 ; Wellington ignorant of his situation, 356 ; concentrates at Medina del Campo and Salamanca on fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, 367 ; his siege-train captured in Ciudad Rodrigo, 368 ; reaches Fuente Sauco, 369 ; goes into cantonments at Valladolid, 370 ; army suffers in efficiency, 371 ; told that Soult cannot send troops to Badajoz, 372 ; unable to concentrate because he has no supplies, 374 ; four courses open to, on hearing of siege of Badajoz, 377 ; his divisions dispersed, 379 ; asks to be relieved of his command, 380 ; alarm for safety of Badajoz, 381 ; not aware of Wellington's departure from the Agueda, 382 ; his misgivings on receiving Napoleon's orders, 383 ; his want of war material, 384 ; leaves Tormes for the Agueda, 392 ; advance to the Coa prevents Wellington's march to Andalusia, 411 ; advances on Ciudad Rodrigo, 415 ; bridges the Agueda, 416 ; marches to Alfaiates, 417 ; project for surprising Trant, 418 ; retires to bridge at El Villar, 419 ; enters Salamanca, 420 ; charges Joseph with wasting magazines, 421 ; his shortcomings with regard to Badajoz,

Ciudad Rodrigo, and Almeida, 422 ; gains through d'Espania's disobedience, 423 ; Soult wishes him to manoeuvre against Wellington's left flank, 425 ; want of provisions hampers his movements, 430 ; yields Bonnet's division to Army of the North, 434 ; deprecates employment of his troops south of the Tagus, 441 ; tells Joseph of Wellington's strength north of the Tagus, 442 ; answer to Joseph, 443 ; receives guns, 445 ; Castaños severing communications between Caffarelli and, 447 ; retreats before Wellington towards the Douro, 460 ; advancing to relief of Salamanca, 462 ; bombards the hills of San Cristobal, 462-3 ; withdraws to Aldearrubia, 463 ; criticisms for his action before Salamanca, 467 ; withdraws from Alba de Tormes, 467 ; breaks down all bridges over the Douro, except at Tordesillas, 468 ; asks Joseph and Army of Centre for reinforcements, 469 ; urges Jourdan and Joseph to prevent Hill from joining Wellington, 472 ; resolves to take the offensive, 473 ; reaches the ford of Huerta, 477 ; diffidence and irresolution, 478 ; bivouacks between Alba and Salamanca, 479 ; his strength at Salamanca as against Wellington, 481 ; calls up forces from Babila Fuente, and marches south, 482 ; disposition of his army, 483 ; misapprehensions as to Wellington's movements, 485-6 ; battle of Salamanca, 487, 502-504, 507, 510 ; against Souham commanding army of Portugal, 595 ; Soult's eagerness to escape fate of, 624

Marquinez, Don Benito (guerilla chief), defeats French troops near Valladolid, 436 ; captures French outside of Valladolid, 553 ; movements of his guerilla cavalry during Wellington's retreat, 597

Marschalck, Colonel of Second Hanoverian Dragoons, repulsed by Foy, after success at Garcia Hernandez, 502, 511-12

Martiago, Wellington's Light Division established at, for blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo, 253 ; Wellington's winter quarters, 269 ; Third Division occupies, 350

Massachusetts militia named as able to invade Canada and Nova Scotia, 309

Masséna, André, Marshal, Prince of Essling, opposing Wellington at Santarem, unable to move, 12 ; sends Foy to explain the situation in Portugal to Napoleon, 18 ; Wellington's disposition of troops results in his isolation, 30 ; Soult's failure to march to the Tagus, 31 ; aid from advance of Ninth Corps, 31 ; his tenacity, 33 ; Masséna prepares for retreat, 34 ; his orders for retreat faithfully carried out, 35 ; army aligned between Leiria and Thomar, 36 ; Wellington's admiration of his retreat, 37 n. ; position of his corps, 70 ; warned of impending attack at Pombal, 71 ; passage of Mondego likely to be prevented by floods, 72 ; at Condeixa, 76 ; orders retreat to Miranda do Corvo, 78 ; surprised by German Hussars, and anger against Ney, 79 ; Montbrun's detachment imperilled by Ney's retreat, 80 ; joined by Ney, 82 ; retreat from Miranda do Corvo, and Ney's insubordination, 83-4 ; receives news of Ney's mishap at Foz d'Arouce, 88 ; determines to hold the Alva, 89 ; orders Junot to fall back to Moita, 90 ; trying retreat, 91 ; Masséna's intention to invade Portugal, 93 ; Ney urged to depose him, 94 ; Masséna supersedes Ney, 94 ; d'Erlon insubordinate, 95 ; abandons his project, 96 ; new disposition of troops, 96 ; plans disturbed by Wellington, 97 ; cantons entire army behind the Coa, 99 ; lying between Villa Maior and Sabugal, 100 ; retreat continues, 112 ; enormous losses, 114 ; his achievements in the Portugal campaign, 114 ; his character, 115 ; bent on relief of Almeida, 150 ; Wellington determines to foil him, 151 ; Napoleon orders him to detach d'Erlon's corps to Andalusia, 152 ; joined by Duke of Istria, 152 ; composition of his army, 153 n. ; confronted by Wellington at Fuentes de Oñoro, 156 ; battle of Fuentes de Oñoro, 157-70 ; orders Almeida to be blown up, 171 ; retirement of French army across the Agueda, 171 ; misconception of Wellington's strength, 173 ; campaign of Fuentes de Oñoro coincides with end of his military career, 179 ; reference to his position in 1810-11, 569

Mataro, Milans returns to, for supplies, 438

Matthieu, General Maurice, defeats Lacy at Altafulla, 339

Maucune, General, cantonment at Salamanca, 422 ; at the battle of Salamanca, 484, 486, 491, 507-8 ; pushes forward at foot of Rubena, 595 ; driven back by Paget, 595 ; strong reconnaissance towards Villa Muriel, 602

Maumee river, gave U.S. direct access to western head of Lake Erie, 520 ; junction of Auglaie river at Fort Defiance, 545 ; Winchester ordered to descend to the Rapids, 545

Medellin, mentioned, 273 ; d'Erlon's cavalry at, 371 ; d'Erlon pushes in British outposts at, 429 ; d'Erlon falls back from, 451 ; Hill marches for, 571

Medina del Campo, Marmont concentrates at, after fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, 367 ; Brennier at, 422 ; bulk of Wellington's army at, 468 ; Souham's and Joseph's cavalry meet at, 608

Medina Sidonia, Victor's mistake in sending Cassagne thither, 43

Melimeli, Prince of Tripoli, U.S. attitude to, 310

Mello, Light Division (British) arrives, in pursuit of Masséna, 92

Melville, Robert Dundas, Lord, goes to the Admiralty, 280

Menacho, General, frustrates Soult at Badajoz, 37 ; killed in the sortie, 38

Mendizabal, General (Spanish), Wellington advises that the Army of Estremadura, under him, should hold the line of the Guadiana, 19 ; retreat to Badajoz, 20 ; retires to Alburquerque, 21 ; Wellington's criticism of his proceedings, 22 ; takes command of the augmented army, 23 ; defeated by Soult, 24 ; wreck of his army retires over Portuguese frontier, 121 ; his force, under Castaños' direction during siege of Badajoz, 142 ; defeats Abbé at Sanguesa, 436 ; to give all possible trouble to Marmont, 447

Menne, General, wounded at Salamanca, 505

Merida, bridge of, used by Soult, 21 ; Wellington orders Beresford to resume command of bridge at, 144 ; Marmont reaches, 231 ; d'Erlon withdraws to, 238 ; d'Erlon's strong detachment at, 270 ; Girard leaves, 271 ; mentioned, 273 ; Soult urges Marmont to demonstrate towards, 371 ; Hill at, to watch Marmont, 383 ; Hill recalled to, to hinder Soult, 391 ; Hill at, 424 ; Hill crosses the Guadiana at, 425 ; Hill retires to, 450 ; d'Erlon sends troops towards, to draw out Hill, 456

Merino (a priest), havoc with his guerillas about Burgos, 437

Merle's Division, losses at Sabugal, 111

Mermet, General Julien Augustin, in rear of Machados, 70 ; to attack Poço Velho in the Fuentes fight, 160 ; returns home, 227

Mértola, Blake recrosses the Guadiana at, 242

Messina, conspiracy to seduce Italian troops from British service, 305

Metternich, Clement, Count von, determined to stand outside until peace negotiations begin, 284 ; recommends Prussia to join Russia, 285 ; negotiates advantageously with Napoleon, 286 ; presses for continuance of Russo-Turkish War, 287

Mijadas, Marmont at, 231 ; d'Erlon reports Hill's advance on, 425 ; mentioned, 571

Michigan (Lake), 520

Milan Decree, by Napoleon, in answer to England's Orders in Council, 312 ; American Minister finds no evidence of repeal of, 321

Milans, General, continually harasses Lamarque, 438

Military Secretary to Wellington, Bathurst's mental breakdown, 28 ; Lord Fitzroy Somerset succeeds, 29

Militia Bill, carried through by Brock in Upper Canada, 523

Militia, British, Palmerston's proposals for replenishing, by ordinary recruiting, and not by ballot, 4 ; allowance to wives and families discontinued on Wellington's advice, 4

Militia, Irish, age for enlistment lowered, 281

Militia, Local, period of engagement expires, 281 ; Act for reducing numbers and admitting the principle of substitution, 281

Militia (Norfolk County, Canada), disloyal, or overawed by Prevost's proclamation, refuse to march at Brock's order, 526

Militia (United States), a strong force, but useless for prolonged work in the field, 521

Mina, attacks Valladolid with his guerilla band, 241 ; his boundless activity, 242 ; Napoleon censures Dorsenne for not repressing his bands, 372 ; success in Navarre and elsewhere, 436 ; treachery of a subordinate, 437 ; wounded in action against Abbé, 438

Minorca, Maitland reaches, 556

Mirabete, Hill prepares to carry castle of, 426 ; Chowne's cannonade on, 427 ; Hill prepares to destroy, but leaves it unmolested, 429 ; Foy relieves garrison at, 450 ; Hill hears of this and follows up d'Erlon, 451

Miranda do Corvo, Masséna's retreat to, 77-9 ; Masséna's strength at, when joined by Ney, 82 ; Masséna retreats from, 83

Mohawk river, the, alternative route for Americans to Montreal, 520

Moimenta, difficult road for transport of Wellington's siege-train, 252

Moita, Masséna's army falls back to, from the Alva, 90 ; Wellington halts at, 92

Moncey, Marshal Bon Adrien de, Duke of Conegliano, defied before Valencia, 339

Mondego river, Reynier suggests Masséna's retirement to, 34 ; Montbrun fails to cross the flooded river, 74 ; possible movements of Marmont on, 378 ; dépôt for clothing on, 379 ; Trant, Wilson, and Silveira protect magazines on the, 416 ; Trant crosses, 418

Monasterio, Soult passes through, 182 ; Soul sends reinforcements to d'Erlon by, 454 ; Wellington's army astride the road to France at, in siege of Burgos, 573 ; skirmishes between armies at, 595

Moniteur, its silence as to Napoleon's attack on a British frigate, 257 ; Napoleon forges letters from Spain for the, 282 ; further forgeries to terrify Frederick William of Prussia, 283

Montanchez, mentioned, 273

Monbrun, General Louis Pierre, his cavalry division at Arranha, 70 ; Masséna orders him to Mondego, 70 ; ordered to support Ney, 71 ; unsatisfactory conduct at Coimbra, 74 ; loiters before Coimbra, 80 ; his danger on Ney's retreat, 81 ; his dragoons retreat to El Bodon after Sabugal, 112 ; at battle of Fuentes de Oñoro, 157, 160-3 ; criticism of his conduct, 173 ; shortage of horses, 227 ; drives in Allies' cavalry, but halts at sight of British infantry, 235 ; cavalry and infantry reach Tamames, 259 ; advances on Wellington's Third Division, 260-262 ; his tactics at fault, 263 ; pursues Wellington via Forcalhos, but brought to a stand, 266 ; to march on Cuenca, 348 ; commanding troops in Valencia, 349 ; recalled towards Valencia by forced marches, 367 ; cavalry at Salamanca, 370-71 ; shameful conduct of his troops on return from Alicante, 559

Monte de Azan, Maucune sent to, 486 ; covered by Maucune's left wing, 487 ; Wellington threatens Ferey's retreat on, 496

Montenegrins, in insurrection against France, 555 ; Bentinck sends an aiding force, 555

Montmorin, Baron de, killed in Campo Maior fight, 136

Montreal, seat of Canadian Government, 514 ; the commercial capital and last military station in Lower Canada, 518 ; refused to furnish quota of militia, 527

Montserrat, Macdonald ordered to secure, 16 ; Suchet storms and captures, 248 ; French compelled to abandon because of Lacy's activity, 249

Moore, General Sir John, his opinion as to right government of Sicily, 301

Morillo, Spanish General, reoccupies Aliseda, 272 ; supports Howard in Hill's attack on Girard, 273 ; makes a diversion in Niebla, 391 ; closing in on Seville, 411 ; falls back on Soult's approach to Extremadura, 412 ; to strengthen Hill, 446 ; with Hill, 451 ; mentioned, 454 n.

Mortier, Edouard, Marshal, Duke of Treviso, distracted by insurgent bands in Spain, 12 ; Junot advises Masséna to await his arrival, 34 ; recalls bulk of his force to Badajoz, 122 ; ignores news of Beresford's approach to Arronches, 123 ; hands over his command on the Guadiana to Latour - Maubourg, 137

Moscow, Grand Army concentrating for march on, 291 ; Napoleon's objective, 433

Mozarbes, heights of, Soult entrenches and masses at, 614

Mules, high price of, in Spain, 343

Muleteers, Spanish, refuse to work for Portuguese, 343

Munroe, James, American Minister in London, 309, 311

Murat, Joachim, King of Naples, his views of sovereignty in Naples differ from Napoleon's, 7 ; fails to enforce Continental blockade, 289 ; intrigues with Austria, Russia, and England, 289 ; compromised by discovery of correspondence, 290 ; reconciliation with Napoleon, 290 ; Naples to remain with him under proposed peace terms, 299 ; assembling troops in Lower Calabria, 304 ; concerting a league with Queen of Naples against England, 305

Murcia, Freire joins Blake after rallying, 243 ; Ballesteros appears to create a diversion in favour of, 244 ; Blake's futile march into, 249 ; wreck of Freire's and Mahy's armies reassembling in, 372 ; Suchet to create a diversion in, 442 ; Soult's passage through on retreat from Cadiz, 571 ; threatened by Joseph and Soult, 594

Murcia, Spanish army of, quiet since its defeat at Baza, 243

Murgeon, General La Cruz, 570

Murphy, Major, of Eighty-eighth, killed, 490

Murray, General George, chief of Wellington's staff, leaving for an appointment in Ireland, 448

Murviedro, Blake falls back before Suchet at, 277

Musnier, General, commands a division of the Army of Valencia, 433
Myers, Colonel, fine conduct at Albuera, 214

Napier, Major George, supports forlorn hope at Ciudad Rodrigo, 359; wounded in storming Ciudad Rodrigo, 362, 366

Napier, William, British General and military writer, note on Masséna's food supply, 35; criticism of Napier's course at battle of Sabugal, 110; criticism of Beresford at Albuera, 210; his undeserved criticism of Wellington concerning siege-train, 226; refuses the theory of Napoleon responsible for French reverses in Spain, 420; false estimate of Marmont's strength, 422; commendation of Hill for self-restraint, 458; on Marmont's strength at Salamanca, 463 *n.*; criticism of Wellington and Marmont at Salamanca, 466 *n.*; estimate of strength of Wellington's army, 481-2 *n.*; comments on Clausel's retreat considered, 564; comments on Wellington's failure at Burgos, 583

Naples, Napoleon refuses to send a diplomatic representative to, 289; Queen's baneful influence, 300; Bentinck's scheme for reducing the Court to subjection, 303

Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of the French, his failure to conciliate subjugated people, 6; perversity of his lieutenants, 7; his attitude towards Russia, 9; preliminary steps towards Russian campaign, 9; scheme for invasion of England, 9; anticipates conscription lists, 10; his six years' calls on France, and recourse to foreign mercenaries, 10; his wastefulness as a commander, 11; failure in his combinations against the British Army in Spain, 11; his inadequate information of events in the Peninsula, 12; his military preparations in Eastern Europe, 12; his endeavour to personally control all parts of his empire, 13; refuses to concede to Joseph supreme command in Spain, 14; his substitutions of single for dual commands in Northern Spain, 15; anticipates Masséna's propositions concerning Portugal, 18; his impossible instructions to Drouet, 31; urges Masséna to hold on, in view of possible political crisis in England, 33; orders Masséna to detach d'Erlon's Corps to Andalusia, 152; approves Marmont's drastic measures as to discipline, 227; condemns Bessières'

order to Bonnet to march to Leon, 240; recalls Bessières from his command, 241; urges Suchet to carry out his plans in Valencia, 248; change in his notions as to transport, 255; his orders as to drafts ignored by generals, 255; sends reinforcements to Marmont, 256; preparing a diversion on British coast, 257; receives fictitious report from Marmont, 268; orders Bonnet to occupy Asturias, 269; annoyance at Girard's defeat at Arroyo Molinos, 276; instructs Suchet to cross the frontier of Valencia, 277; his difficulties, 282; intimidation of Prussia, 283; peremptory order to Prussia to cease military preparations, 284; conditions of alliance, 284; alliance with Austria, 285; his guarantees to Austria, 286; writes to the Sultan, 288; evasive reply to Polish deputation, 289; heaps indignities on Murat and his troops, 289; critical position in relation to Italy and Belgium, 290; and Holland, 291; losing touch with French feeling and sympathies, 291; plan for weakening Wellington, 292; changes his Spanish plans, 293; wrong estimate of Wellington's strength, 293-4; his policy with his family, 295; promises to Joseph, 295; recalls Imperial Guard and other troops from Spain, 296; appoints Joseph to political direction of Spanish affairs and chief command of Spanish armies, 298; equivocal terms of the appointment, 298; proposals of peace to Castlereagh, 299; endangers his hold on Spain and Italy, and inspires European ill-will against Britain, 306-7; intention to coerce U.S. into war with England on the "Search" question, 312; confiscates all American vessels in French ports, 315; studied insolence to U.S., seizing her ships, 318; eager to drive America and England to hostilities, 319; increases the rigour of the Continental System, 320; refuses compensation to U.S. for ships seized, 321; commercial restrictions aggrieve North American Indians, 322; succeeds in plunging America into conflict with England, 323; orders Reille to join Suchet at Valencia, 338; prospect of invasion of Russia, 345; how it would affect Spain, 346; final orders to Marmont, 349; orders Marmont to strengthen Dorsenne, 372; angry letters concerning fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, 373; futility of his multifarious orders, 374; French disasters in Spain due to his policy of direction from

Paris, 420-1; leaves Paris for Dresden, 433; instructions to Joseph, 434; Grand Army to invade Spain on return from Russia, 434; calculations as to Marmont's advance into Beira, 439; orders to Soult, 440; and to Marmont, 441; crosses the Niemen, 444; attachment of French Canadians to, 514-515; early march into Russia triumphant, 589; ruin of French cause in Spain due to his blunders, 625

Napoleon Battery, assailed at Burgos, 581

Napoleon Dragoons, Soult's escort, 613

Nava del Rey, Marmont crossing the Douro, halts at, 473

Naval Combats and Movements:—

H.M.S. Caledonia, maintains British supremacy on Lake Erie, 535; Elliott captures her, 536

Chesapeake, *H.M.S. Leopard* carries off British deserters from, by force, 311; the affray referred to, 522

Detroit, surrounded by Hull on capitulation, 535; driven off, run aground, and destroyed, 536

Lady Prevost, Brock's only remaining ship, 537

H.M.S. Leopard, carrying off of British deserters from, by force, 311; the affray referred to, 522

H.M.S. Little Belt, attacked and destroyed by the *President*, 320

Oneida, U.S. brig, on Lake Ontario, 534

President attacks *H.M.S. Little Belt*, 320

Queen Charlotte, covers Brock's right in attack on Detroit, 531

Naval movements in Canada, difficulty in finding suitable officers and sailors, 535

Naval stations, on Canadian lakes, 517

Naval superiority in Canada, due to Brock's foresight, 522

Naval Moral, Marmont's head-quarters, 238; Bremen marches towards, 347

Navarre, Reille ordered to quit, and join Suchet, 338; Mina's successes in, 436

Navas Frias, Wellington's Fifth Division at, 253

Nave de Haver, a village on battleground of Fuentes de Oñoro, 155; Spencer retires to, 229; Wellington's Sixth Division at, 253; Graham withdraws troops to, 26

Navy, lacking for U.S., and its value if built, 517

Neutral shipping, restrictions on, during British blockade, 309

New England States, discontent at the President's attitude on the embargo, 316

Newfoundland Fencibles, taken to make up British crews, 535

New York militia, at Lewiston, 537

Ney, Michael, Marshal, Duke of Elchingen, advises Masséna to pass the Tagus and join Soult, 34; ordered to retreat and join Drouet at Leiria, 35; halts at Leiria, 36; his instructions, 71; repudiates Masséna's orders, 72; evident desire to deliver French Army from Portugal, 74; falls back before Wellington upon Redinha, 74; retreat towards Masséna's main body at Condeixa, 76; strong position at Condeixa, 79; evacuation of position, 79; Masséna's charge of treachery, 80; driven back from Casal Novo, 81; retreat to Miranda de Corvo, 82; his insubordination during retreat, 83; Wellington's surprise attack and Ney's defeat at Fox d'Arouce, 84-6; soreness at his reverse, 88; crosses the Alva, 89; blows up the bridge, 89; urges Masséna to retreat, 90; at Carrapichana, 92; urged to depose Masséna, 94; letters of remonstrance, and threat to withdraw to Almeida, 94; Masséna supersedes him, 94; Ney quits the army, 95

Niagara river, with naval superiority open to U.S., 520; Brock anticipates American onslaught towards Straits of, 523; enemy's increased strength at, 533; Prevost favours abandonment, 534; Americans fritter away strength at, 547

Niebla, Blake at, lays siege to the castle, 242; Penne-Villemur and Morillo closing in on Seville from, 411; castle blown up by French before Skerrett can attack, 570

Niemen river, Napoleon crosses, 444

Ninth Corps (French Army), one of Napoleon's improvisations, 31

Niza, Allies at, 230; Wellington's Seventh Division at, 251

Nogales, a tributary of the Albuera, 183

Noguera Pollaresa river, 438

Noguera Rivagorzana river, 438

Norfolk County (Canada), militia of, refuse to march, 526

Nova Scotia, open to invasion by U.S., 309

Nuestra Senhora de la Pena, Marmont's advance forces occupy, 479; occupied by Light Division, and fronting Foy, 484

Ocaña, battle of, referred to, 24-5; Soult at, 593; Joseph at, 605

O'Donnell, General Carlos, 247

O'Donnell, General José, commander of Spanish troops at Alicante, beaten by French, 556

Oguella, 233

O'Hare, Lieut.-colonel, killed in capture of Badajoz, 405

Old Castile, Marmont able to concentrate for action in, 238 ; suggested to be held down by Marmont, 377 ; could Wellington hold it? 588

Olivença, Soult attacks, 21 ; Herck's disgraceful surrender, 21 ; Latour-Maubourg leaves small garrison there while falling back from Badajoz, 138 ; surrendered to Beresford, 139-40 ; guns at, collected for siege of Badajoz, 143 ; Kemmis instructed to pass through, 185 ; evacuated by Allies, 232 ; mentioned, 234 ; Godinot blows up fortifications at, 237

Olivo Fort (Tarragona), successfully stormed by Suchet, 245

Olmedo, Clauseau retreats to, 550 ; Clinton marches to, 562

Oneida (Lake), alternative route for Americans to Montreal, 520

Ontario (Lake), need of chain of posts between Lakes Erie and, 519 ; part of waterway to Montreal, 520 ; British naval force on, superior to that of U.S., 521 ; Brock had hoped much from naval superiority on, 533

Oporto, Dickson starts for, 252 ; carts made at, for Wellington's army, 345 ; a port available for Wellington, 374 ; line of communication with, over bad road, 588

Oporto, Bishop of, member of Portuguese Regency, Wellington suspects him of obstruction, 28 ; his illness, recovery, and renewed obstruction, 28

Orders in Council, a retaliation to Berlin Decree, 309 ; England issues second Order, and all territories of France and her Allies in state of blockade, 312 ; revoked by British Government so far as they concerned the U.S., 528

Orense, 242

Oropesa, 429

Orvigo river, 241

Oswego, an alternative route for Americans to Montreal, 520

O'Toole, Colonel, at Ciudad Rodrigo, 358

Ottawa river, a boundary of Lower Canada, 514

Otway, General, pursues French at Campo Maior, 130 ; his cavalry at Albuera, 188 ; drives back French cavalry at Usagre, 219

Oviedo, Bonnet reaches, 269

Pack, Lieutenant-colonel Denis, deplorable condition of his Portuguese brigade, 116 ; told off for blockade of Almeida, 153 ; brigade relieved from blockade of Almeida, 175 ; at Cinco Villas, 176 ; gallant endeavour to break up French retreat from Almeida, 177 ; at Villaboa, 267 ; at assault of Ciudad Rodrigo, 359, 363 ; at battle of Salamanca, 494-5, 507-8 ; sent to Arevalo, 563 ; volunteers for assault on horn-work at Burgos, 574 ; left to blockade Burgos, 583

Paget, General Sir Edward, arrives at Burgos to command the First Division, 586 ; ordered to attack Maucune at Rubena, 595 ; stern repression of drunkenness at Torquemada, 601 ; his Staff fired on at the Pisuerga, 604 ; captured on Wellington's retreat, 618

Pakenham, Lieutenant-colonel Hon. E. M., abandons Aldea da Ponte, and regains the post, 266 ; commands Third Division, 460 ; succeeds Picton, 471 ; at battle of Salamanca, 484-5, 487-9, 491-2, 494, 504, 507, 509 ; his offer to send up guns to Burgos rejected, 583-4

Palamos, Maitland appears before, 565

Palencia, Young Guard cantoned at, 240 ; Clauseau halts at, 551 ; Wellington commands bridge at, 601 ; Foy pushes forward against, 602

Palermo, Bentinck calls up British troops from Messina to, 305 ; Maitland detained at, 555

Palmerston, Henry Temple, 3rd Viscount, brings in Army Estimates, 4, 281

Palombini, General, division taken from Army of the Ebro to join Army of the North, 434 ; summoned to Marmont's assistance, 470 ; cannot reinforce Marmont, 471 ; to support Treilhard, 557 ; his infantry cross the Tormes, 613

Pamplona, Colonel (Portuguese), brigade starving and plundering, 116

Pardaleras, a fort of Badajoz, attacked by Soult in 1811, 146 ; false attack on, 222 ; description of, 384

Paris, sick of Spain, 282 ; dearth and financial crisis, 291

Parliamentary Session, ended (1810), 3

Pasley, Captain, Director of School of Sappers and Miners at Chatham, 379

Pastores, 260-1 ; Light Division at, 350

Peace terms, as proposed by Napoleon to Castlereagh, 299

Pécheux, General, occupies passes on road to Gibraltar, 327 ; demonstration before Tarifa, 333 ; his brigade at the Tormes, 613 n.

Pedrogaõ, Wellington's First Division at, 253 ; Alten retreats through, 416

Pega, Masséna establishes headquarters at, 97

Penamacor, Masséna's impossible order to Reynier to collect grain, etc., 96 ; Allies arrive at, 230 ; Wellington's First Divi-

sion at, 253 ; Graham in command at, 253-4 ; Wellington's winter quarters at, 269 ; Seventh Division leaves, 350 ; Marmont at, 417 ; Light Division at, 419

Peñeranda, mentioned, 609

Peñeranda de Douro, Merino surprises and routs French column at, 437

Peniscola, reduced by Suchet, 339

Penne-Villemur, General, makes a diversion in Niebla, 391 ; closing in on Seville, 411 ; falls back to Estremadura, on Soult's approach, 412 ; to strengthen Hill, 446 ; his aptitude for plundering expeditions, 447 ; with Hill, 451 ; reconnaissance from Llerena towards Azuaga, 451

Pepin, General, mortally wounded at Albuera, 201

Perales, pass of, Marmont enters, 229 ; Wellington's Fifth Division at, 253 ; Foy demonstrates towards the pass, 259 ; Foy to create a diversion there in favour of Marmont, 268

Perceval, Spencer, 3 ; his determination to limit the Regency by Act of Parliament, 3 ; Prince of Wales' anger with, 4 ; his correspondence with Wellington, 118 ; his Ministry threatened with dissolution, 280

Pereira, Montbrun reports possibility of bridging the Mondego at, 74

Perpignan, Napoleon concentrating troops at, 18

Philippe, Captain, his stand against the German charge at Garcia Hernandez, 501

Philippon, General Armon, Baron, left with small garrison at Badajoz, 138 ; destroys Beresford's trenches, 222 ; determines to cut his way out of Badajoz, 225 ; his supplies ended on the day when the French Army relieved him, 232 ; reports resumption of preparations at Elvas for siege of Badajoz, 382 ; his energy in providing for defence, 385 ; reprobates the defenders of Picurina, and strengthens defences, 390 ; wounded, 394 ; surrenders Badajoz, 403 ; narrow escape in the sack of Badajoz, 404

Picton, Major-general Thomas, threatens Ney's left at Redinha, 75 ; pressure on Ney during French retreat, 76 ; division near Mello in pursuit of Masséna, 93 ; Loison, greatly superior, does not attack him, 98 ; at battle of Sabugal, 108 ; division reaches the Coa, 108 ; with the investing force at Badajoz, 222 ; between Oquella and Campo Maior, 233 ; withdraws from El Bodon, and joins Colville, 262 ; endeavours to check disorder on capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, 363 ; leads assault on castle in Badajoz, 396 ; wounded, 397 ; takes command for second attempt, 400 ; masters the castle, 401 ; masters the citadel, 408 ; returns to England in ill-health, 471

Picurina, an outlying fort at Badajoz, 146 ; captured by Kempt, 388-90

Pinhancos, British infantry arrive in pursuit of Masséna, 92

Pinkney, William, American envoy, on commercial relations with England, 309 ; authorised to renew negotiations, 311 ; offers to repeal the American embargo in return for English cancelling of Orders in Council, 315 ; Canning refuses, 315 ; approaches Wellesley to induce repeal of blockade, 318

Pinto, Spaniards in second line at, 606

Pisuerga river, protects Marmont's flank, 468 ; Clausel ascends the, 551 ; bridge over, ruined by Clausel at Simancas, 563 ; Clausel falls back up the right bank, 563 ; crosses the, 564 ; Wellington crosses, 597 and n. ; Wellington's army at junction of the Carrion with the, 601 ; French cross at Torquemada, 601 ; Souham determines to cross, 602 ; Wellington not strong enough to hold the line at, 604

Plasencia, Masséna cantons his army at, 93 ; Marmont at, 231 ; probable movement of Marmont from, 253 ; Marmont shifts head-quarters to, 256 ; Brennier quits, 347

Plattsburg, Dearborn in winter quarters at, 545

Poço Velho, battleground of Fuentes de Oñoro, 156

Poland, the point of friction between Russia and Prussia, 283 ; to be conciliated by Napoleon or neutralised, 286 ; Napoleon outbids Alexander by offering an independent Poland, 288

Pole, W. Wellesley, Wellington's letter to, complaining of Government's negligence, 27

Polish regiments, withdrawing from Spain for Russia, 348 ; troops withdrawn from Spain, 433

Pollos, Marmont's right at, 468 ; Wellington's Third Division reaches the ford at, 468

Pombal, Masséna drawn up in force at, 37 and n. ; Marcognet's brigade at, 70 ; Wellington intends to confront Masséna at, 71 ; Wellington's advance on, 73

Ponsonby, Major Hon. F. C., successful charge against Ruffin's reformed division (in Cadiz sortie), 60 ; pursues Soult, 412 ;

at Villafranca and Ribera, 413; sent to Arevalo, 563

Ponsonby, General Frederick, Wellington tells him of Cocks's death at Burgos, 580; says Marmont outmanœuvred himself, 587; his cavalry brigade misdirected by Gordon, 611

Ponte da Murcella, bridge-building, Ney awaiting its completion, 88

Pope Pius VII., resentment of Roman Catholics in Belgium at Napoleon's quarrel with, 290

Popham, Admiral Sir Home, assists guerillas with a small squadron, 436; his squadron raids northern coast of Spain, 447; coast attacks with varying success, 470; harasses Caffarelli from sea, 554; Wellington applies to, for powder for siege of Burgos, 578; sends powder to Burgos, 581; ability to send cannon to Burgos, 583

Porlier, Juan Diaz, leader in Asturias, 239; storms Santander, 242

Portalegre, Beresford moves to, 122; Beresford instructed to take up a position at, 143; Allies at, 230; becomes Wellington's head-quarters, 238; Wellington's First and Fifth Divisions at, 251; Hill's head-quarters, 270; Hill advances from, to strike at Girard, 271; Hill falls back to, 350; Wellington reaches, 382; Graham at, 424

Portugal, Wellington's anxieties as to internal affairs, 27; inefficiency of the Commissariat, 27; a party in, friendly to France, and hence espionage, 28; Ordenança of, dismissed, 88; Masséna contemplates invasion, 93; Wellington refers to calamities of war in, 117; sufferings through the war, 119; Napoleon's comment on dear supplies, 255; Soult and Suchet to combine and march upon, 294; mentioned, 587

Portuguese Army, deficient in transport, 86; condition of, goes from bad to worse during Masséna's pursuit, 116; deplorable failure of Commissariat, 116

Portuguese Government, Wellington's relations with, not cordial, 376

Portuguese militia, Wellington resolves on their dismissal, 88; movements of, after Sabugal, 112

Pousa Falle, 95

Power, General, to make a feint assault on the bridge-head on the Guadiana, 395; mad pillage in Badajoz by his Portuguese brigade, 404

Powis, Captain, at Badajoz, 388

Pradt, Abbé de, Napoleon's agent in Poland, 289

President, attacks *H.M.S. Little Belt* off American coast, 320

Prevost, Sir George, Governor of Canadian Forces, his choice of Commander-in-Chief, 522-4; deprecates aggression on Brock's part, 526; sends small reinforcements to Brock, 527; suggests to Dearborn a suspension of hostilities, 528; his action applauded by Cabinet, 529; strained relations with Brock, 533; his policy of abandonment west of Niagara and Kingston, 534; too ready for armistice, 543; his responsibility for unsatisfactory ending of the Niagara frontier campaign, 545; captures the American blockhouse on Lake Champlain, 545; purchases and sends flour to Wellington, 548

Proctor, Colonel, harasses Hull's communications near Amherstburg, 530; his victory at Brownstown, 546-7

Prussia, becoming a dangerous enemy to Napoleon, 7; Napoleon's steps to prevent an alliance with Russia, 283; treaty signed for offensive and defensive alliance with France, 285

Prussian Army, Hardenberg in Paris, seeking removal of restrictions on the, 283; Napoleon insists on reduction of, 284

Puebla de Senabria, 240

Puente Duero, Marmont repairs bridge at, 471

Puente Larga, Hill secures bridge at, 606

Puigcerda, Lacy invades France and raises contributions at, 249; Napoleon's frantic rage, 249; French beaten by Sarsfield at, 438

Punhete, Massena establishes equipment for bridging the Tagus, 30

Quadasaes, 267

Quebec, the key of Canada and main base of British operations — its importance demands strong garrison, 517-18; exposed to U.S. because of American advantages on the frontier, 521; fortifications repaired by Brock, 522; arrival of Hundred and Third Regiment at, from England, and Royal Scots expected, 527

Queen Charlotte, armed vessel, covers Brock's right in attack on Detroit, 531

Queen of Naples, her profligacy, 303; political intrigues, 304; opposition to her husband's abdication, 305

Queenston, description of, and Brock's force at, 538; action of, 539-42

Quinta de São João, Wellington's headquarters, 234; Wellington quits, and

establishes head-quarters at Portalegre, 238
Quintana Dueñas, Wellington retreats by, 596

Ragusa (Duke of). *See* Marmont
Ramsay, Captain Norman, at Fuentes, 162
Rapoula, M[‘]Mahon's Portuguese cavalry at, 267

Redinha, combat of, 70 ; French criticism of Wellington for undue caution, 76-7
Regency, necessary through insanity of George III., and Perceval's determination to limit it, 3-4

Regiments, British :—

Cavalry—

Third Dragoon Guards (Prince of Wales's Regiment), 122 n., 191, 207 n., 218, 219, 262, 412, 451, 453, 455

Fourth Dragoon Guards, 122 n., 412

Fifth Dragoon Guards, 412, 414, 415, 480

First or Royal Dragoons, 74, 97, 100, 154 n., 175, 229, 453, 491

Third or King's Own Dragoons, 412, 415, 475

Fourth or Queen's Own Dragoons, 198, 207, 218, 219, 412, 415

Seventh Hussars, 580 n.

Thirteenth Hussars, 620 n.

Ninth Light Dragoons, 271 n., 274, 275, 620

Eleventh Light Dragoons, 261, 493

Twelfth Light Dragoons, 413, 414

Thirteenth Light Dragoons, 122 n., 125-133, 137, 138 n., 140, 141, 185, 192, 207 n., 235, 271 n., 276, 415, 424, 620

Fourteenth Light Dragoons, 100, 154 n., 175, 229, 413, 414, 487, 493

Sixteenth Light Dragoons, 97, 154 n., 161, 175, 413, 414, 493, 574 n., 580, 622

Eighteenth Hussars, 580

Twentieth Light Dragoons, 556

Royal Engineers, 155 n., 556 n., 572 n.

Royal Staff Corps, 148-9

Artillery—

Royal Horse Artillery, 155 n., 218, 557, 570, 572 n., 597

Ross's battery, 73

Royal Artillery (general), 148, 330, 524 n.

Marine Artillery, 556

Infantry—

First Guards, 64, 570, 572 n., 574, 585, 601

Coldstream Guards, 64, 154 n., 582

Third Guards, 64, 154 n., 582

Regiments, British (*contd.*) :—

Line Regiments—

1st Foot (Royal Scots), 154 n., 451, 506, 527

2nd Foot (Queen's), 155 n.

3rd Foot (Buffs), 122 n., 197, 206, 206 n., 208, 358

4th Foot, 154 n., 405, 491, 553 n.

5th Foot (Fusiliers), 108, 154 n., 260, 358, 359, 360, 400, 405, 487, 553 n.

7th Foot (Fusiliers), 122 n., 204, 206, 207 n., 213 n., 266, 506

8th Foot, 515, 516

9th Foot, 41 n., 154 n., 491

10th Foot, 556 n.

11th Foot, 155 n., 330, 496, 506, 506 n.

14th Foot, 122 n., 489

23rd Foot (Fusiliers), 122 n., 204, 207 n., 213 n., 266

24th Foot, 154 n., 158, 160, 168, 574 n., 579

26th Foot, 574 n.

27th Foot, 122 n., 207 n., 475

28th Foot, 41, 41 n., 122 n., 199, 207 n., 213, 213 n., 271 n., 275, 426

29th Foot, 122 n., 198, 199, 201, 206, 213, 213 n., 340

30th Foot, 154 n., 405, 406, 491

31st Foot, 122 n., 197, 198, 199, 206, 206 n., 213, 213 n.

32nd Foot, 506

34th Foot, 122 n., 199, 207 n., 213, 213 n., 271 n., 277 n., 352 n., 426

36th Foot, 155 n., 177

38th Foot, 154 n., 403, 491, 506, 553 n.

39th Foot, 122 n., 199, 207 n., 213, 213 n., 271 n.

40th Foot, 122 n., 207 n., 475, 476, 496, 506

41st Foot, 515, 516, 519, 522, 524, 524 n., 525, 529, 537, 547

42nd Foot (Highlanders), 154 n., 166, 553 n., 574, 574 n., 575, 585

43rd Foot, 103, 104, 111, 155 n., 352 n., 364, 405, 475, 618, 618 n.

44th Foot, 154 n., 406, 491

45th Foot, 154 n., 487

47th Foot, 41 n., 330, 572 n., 606

48th Foot, 122 n., 197, 198, 199, 201, 206, 206 n., 207 n., 208, 213, 213 n., 266, 395

49th Foot, 515, 516, 518, 522, 524,

527, 537, 538, 541

50th Foot, 154 n., 271 n., 273, 396, 427, 429

51st Foot, 98 n., 155 n., 223, 224

52nd Foot, 107, 111, 150, 155 n., 165, 352 n., 359, 366, 388 n., 405

53rd Foot, 155 n., 496, 506, 506 n.

Regiments, British (*contd.*) :—*Line Regiments (contd.)* :—

57th Foot, 122 n., 198, 199, 201, 205, 206, 207 n., 213, 213 n., 214, 506
 58th Foot, 491, 556 n.
 59th Foot, 572 n.
 60th Foot, 108, 154 n., 155 n., 207 n., 356, 396, 397, 427, 468
 61st Foot, 155 n., 506, 506 n.
 66th Foot, 122 n., 197, 206, 206 n., 208, 213 n.
 67th Foot, 41, 54-5, 65, 347 n., 565, 572 n.
 68th Foot, 463, 481, 619 n., 621
 69th Foot, 512
 71st Foot, 154 n., 158, 159, 160, 168, 172, 271 n., 274, 427
 74th Foot, 154 n., 169, 170, 172, 263, 359, 362, 388, 487
 77th Foot, 260, 261, 262, 358, 360, 388
 79th Foot, 154 n., 158, 160, 168, 169, 172, 477 n., 574 n.
 81st Foot, 556 n.
 82nd Foot, 41 n., 330, 553 n.
 83rd Foot, 154 n., 157, 358, 388, 487
 85th Foot, 98 n., 155 n., 160, 165, 223, 224
 87th Foot, 41 n., 64, 330, 331, 333, 334, 570, 572 n.
 88th Foot, 154 n., 169, 170, 172, 359, 362, 388, 487, 490, 506
 92nd Foot, 154 n., 271 n., 274, 277 n., 428
 Old 94th Foot, 154 n., 487
 95th Foot (now Rifle Brigade), 41 n., 73, 103, 104, 106, 111, 150, 154 n., 155 n., 161, 330, 352 n., 495, 475, 570, 572 n., 606
 Old 97th, 122 n., 207 n.
 100th Foot, 515, 516, 518
 103rd Foot, 527

Canadian Regiments

Fencibles, 516, 527
 Glengarry Regiment, 516
 Newfoundland Fencibles, 516, 524 n.
 Provincial Fencibles, 516
 Tenth Royal Veteran Battalion, 515, 516, 524 n., 527

Regiments (Foreign, in British Service) :—

Brunswick-Oels Infantry, 98 n., 154 n., 155 n., 162, 224, 595, 604
 Chasseurs Britanniques, 98 n., 155 n., 162, 224, 572 n.
 Watteville's, 572 n.

*King's German Legion**Artillery*, 208Regiments (Foreign, in British Service) (*contd.*) :—*King's German Legion (contd.)* :—*Cavalry* :—

Dragoons, 557-8
 German Hussars, 73, 74, 79
 1st Hussars, 154 n., 175, 261, 487
 2nd Hussars, 235, 271 n., 274, 330, 475, 493, 552, 570, 572 n., 617

Infantry :—

1st Light Battalion, 207 n., 462, 557, 598
 2nd Light Battalion, 207 n., 598, 619 n.
 4th Line Battalion, 556 n.
 6th Line Battalion, 556 n.
 Hanoverian Infantry, 599
 (General references), 356, 583

Regiments (Portuguese) :—

Cavalry :—

Hamilton's, 87

Pack's, 74, 76

Cavalry (not defined), 493

Infantry :—

1st Caçadores, 155 n., 352 n.
 2nd Caçadores, 155 n., 160, 165, 358
 3rd Caçadores, 73, 155 n., 352 n., 359
 5th Caçadores, 122 n.
 6th Caçadores, 155, 271 n., 426, 427
 7th Caçadores, 483, 495
 8th Caçadores, 154 n., 362
 1st Line Regiment, 122 n.
 2nd Line Regiment, 122 n.
 3rd Line Regiment, 154 n.
 4th Line Regiment, 122 n., 154 n., 271 n.
 5th Line Regiment, 122 n.
 6th Line Regiment, 155 n., 271 n.
 7th Line Regiment, 122 n., 155 n.
 8th Line Regiment, 155 n.
 9th Line Regiment, 154 n.
 10th Line Regiment, 122 n., 154, 271 n.
 11th Line Regiment, 122 n.
 12th Line Regiment, 155 n.
 15th Line Regiment, 154 n.
 17th Line Regiment, 223, 224
 18th Line Regiment, 155, 271 n.
 19th Line Regiment, 155 n.
 20th Line Regiment, 41 n., 570, 572 n.
 21st Line Regiment, 154, 260
 23rd Line Regiment, 122 n.

Spanish Regiment—La Mancha, 558

Regiments (French) :—

Cavalry :—

10th Chasseurs, 618
 13th Chasseurs, 600 n.
 14th Chasseurs, 600 n.

Regiments, French (*contd.*) :—*Cavalry (contd.)* —

15th Chasseurs, 600, 600 *n.*
 21st Chasseurs, 190 *n.*
 27th Chasseurs, 190 *n.*
 28th Chasseurs, 600 *n.*
 31st Chasseurs, 600 *n.*
 2nd Dragoons, 327
 4th Dragoons, 190 *n.*
 6th Dragoons, 600 *n.*
 13th Dragoons, 558
 15th Dragoons, 600 *n.*
 16th Dragoons, 327
 17th Dragoons, 190 *n.*, 451
 18th Dragoons, 558
 19th Dragoons, 558
 21st Dragoons, 327
 22nd Dragoons, 558
 27th Dragoons, 452
 Dragons Napoléon, 558
 1st Hussars, 600 *n.*
 2nd Hussars, 190 *n.*
 3rd Hussars, 493, 600 *n.*
 10th Hussars, 190 *n.*
 22nd Hussars, 600 *n.*
 26th Hussars, 600 *n.*
 (Not defined), 619 *n.*
 Lancers of Berg, 558, 600 *n.*
 1st Lancers, 190 *n.* (?), 619 *n.*
 4th Spanish Chasseurs, 190 *n.*

Infantry —

Gendarmes, 600 *n.*
 Junot's Corps, 75
 2nd Nassau Infantry, 558
 Ney's Corps, 81
 7th Poles, 327
 9th Poles, 327
 6th Light Infantry, 429, 604
 9th Light Infantry, 169
 12th Light Infantry, 190 *n.*
 16th Light Infantry, 190 *n.*, 327
 17th Light Infantry, 111
 21st Light Infantry, 190 *n.*
 27th Light Infantry, 327
 28th Light Infantry, 190 *n.*
 31st Light Infantry, 108, 498
 3rd of the Line, 491 *n.*
 8th of the Line, 327
 15th of the Line, 493
 22nd of the Line, 493
 26th of the Line, 498
 27th of the Line, 85 *n.*
 34th of the Line, 190
 39th of the Line, 84, 86
 40th of the Line, 190 *n.*
 43rd of the Line, 327
 47th of the Line, 108
 51st of the Line, 190 *n.*, 327
 54th of the Line, 327

Regiments, French (*contd.*) :—*Infantry (contd.)* —

55th of the Line, 190 *n.*
 58th of the Line, 190 *n.*
 62nd of the Line, 491 *n.*
 63rd of the Line, 327
 64th of the Line, 190 *n.*
 69th of the Line, 84
 70th of the Line, 111, 498
 76th of the Line, 500, 501 *n.*
 77th of the Line, 498 =
 88th of the Line, 190 *n.*, 401
 94th of the Line, 327
 95th of the Line, 327
 100th of the Line, 190 *n.*
 101st of the Line, 491 *n.*
 103rd of the Line, 190 *n.*
 118th of the Line, 495
 119th of the Line, 495
 120th of the Line, 496
 122nd of the Line, 486, 494, 495

Rego, Colonel do, 177

Reguengo, Beresford halts at, 123

Reille, General Honoré Charles, ordered south from Aragon and Navarre to join Suchet, 338 ; division added to the Army of Catalonia, 433 ; in command of Army of the Ebro, 434

Reitzenstein, Captain von (afterwards General), great charge at Garcia Hernandez, 501

Rémond, General, Hill vainly endeavours to overtake him after battle at Arroyo Molinos, 276 ; his brigade crosses the Tormes, 613

Rendo, Graham arrives at, 266 ; Anson's cavalry brigade at, 267

Rensselaer, Colonel, Adjutant-general, to his cousin, General Rensselaer, 537 ; lands night attack party at Queenston, 539 ; his bravery, 541

Rensselaer, Major-general van, in command of American forces, 537 ; plans a surprise on Brock, but fails, 538 ; strength of attacking party which lands at Queenston, 539 ; sends to Smyth for reinforcements, 541 ; proposes armistice, and resigns, 543

Retiro, Tower of, in Tarifa, 329-30 ; mentioned, 568

Reuss, Lacy defeats French near, 339 ; Suchet goes to, 554

Revilla Vallegera, mentioned, 597 *n.*

Rey, General, saves Maransin's force from destruction at Cartama, 381 ; surprised and beaten by Ballesteros, 412 ; Maransin and Pierre Soult to his aid at Malaga, 412

Reynier, General Jean Louis, advises Masséna to divide his army, 34 ; ordered to

hold fast at Santarem, 35 ; ordered to Espinal, 71 ; recalled by Masséna, but the countermand is too late, 82 ; passes the Alva at Sarzedo, 88 ; ignores Masséna's instructions and remains at Sarzedo, 89 ; Masséna's indignation, 90 ; proceeds to Valle de Lobo, 95-96 ; at Sabugal, 99 ; ordered to retire to Alfaiates, 101 ; warned of Wellington's attack, 102 ; advances too late against British at Sabugal, 108 ; rashness in falling back on Alfaiates before daylight, 110 ; retreat to Gallegos, 112 ; compelled to retire when Trant drives back Claparéde, 113 ; demonstration before Fuentes, 159 ; covers Brennier's passage of the river in retreat from Almeida, 177 ; marches towards pass of Baños, 228

Rezonde, General, make up second line of Clinton's advance, 496 ; repulsed by Ferey, 497

Ribeira del Campo river, confluence with the Dos Casas, 156

Ribera, Allies' cavalry at, 220 ; Slade and Ponsonby at, 413 ; Hill's cavalry at, 451

Richelieu, junction with the St. Lawrence, 518

Ridge, Major (afterwards Colonel), at Ciudad Rodrigo, 360 ; enters Badajoz Castle, 400 ; mortally wounded, 401

Rio Mayor, Wellington to attack Junot there, 35

Rivillas (at Badajoz), dammed to form an inundation, 384

Robe, Colonel, wounded at the Pisuerga, 604

Robera, d'Erlon pushes in British outposts at, 429

Roberts, Captain, Commandant at St. Joseph's, ordered by Brock to capture Mackinac, 524-5

Robleda, 263

Roche, General, to join Maitland at Alicante, 556 ; warned by Wellington not to be defeated again, 557 and n. ; with Maitland, 565

Roda, Bourke beaten at, by Sarsfield, 439

Roguet, General, commands the Young Guard in Northern Spain, 240 ; harassed by guerillas, 241

Romana, Marquis de la, Soult blamed for neglecting to pursue, 18 ; sends troops to aid Mendizabal, 23 ; his death and Wellington's tribute, 23

Rome, King of, baptized in Paris, 295

Ronda, Barrois moves on, 327 ; Ballesteros moves from, and closes in on Seville, 411 ; Ballesteros falls back to, after beating Rey, 412

Rose, Mr., envoy to U.S., to arrange reparation for the *Chesapeake* outrage, 311 ; arrives in America, 314 ; restrictions, and abrupt ending of negotiations, 314

Ross, General, ordered to join Maitland, 556 ; mentioned, 557 n.

Rousseau, Ruffin's brigadier, mortally wounded in fight for Barrosa Hill, 56 ; his dog's devotion, 64 n.

Rovira, General (guerilla chief), defeats French at Fluvia, 438 ; French column annihilated near Figueras, 438

Rubena, Wellington takes up strong position at, 595

Rudd, Major, in attack on Badajoz, 338-9

Rueda, Marmont falls back to, 467 ; Wellington's head-quarters, 607

Ruffin, General, engaged Allies' flank outside Cadiz, 46 ; defence of Barrosa Hill, defeated, 53-6 ; mortally wounded, 56

Russia becomes the enemy of France, influences which led to this, 8 ; Napoleon's attitude towards, in matter of war or peace, 9 ; Napoleon's preliminary steps towards a Russian campaign, 9 ; arming against Napoleon, 282 ; Prussian hopes of concessions by, concerning Poland, 283 ; offers secret offensive and defensive alliance with Prussia, 284 ; her gains in the European struggle, 285 ; Bernadotte's plan ripens into alliance with England and, 286 ; proposal for partition of Prussia, 286 ; Napoleon preparing for invasion of, 345 ; expectation of withdrawal of French troops from Spain for, 346 ; Grand Army to invade Spain on return from, 434 ; war against, 444 ; Napoleon's march into, 589

Russian campaign, depletes French armies in Spain, and creates trouble and confusion, 374 ; troops drawn from Spain for, 433

Ruvina, advance of British cavalry brigade at, 267

Sabugal, combat of, 102-111 ; how the fight influenced Wellington's decision as to engaging at Fuentes de Oñoro, 174 ; Spencer to retreat thither if Marmont advanced, 217 ; Wellington's Seventh Division at, 253 ; the only bridge over the Coa at, 267 ; Alten retreats through, 416 ; Marmont at, 417 ; Trant abandons project for surprising, 418

Sackett's Harbour, American port opposite Kingston on the St. Lawrence, 519 ; American advantage in possessing this naval base, 520 ; Brock's plan against, upset by armistice, 533

Sagunto, Suchet twice fails to carry it by

escalade, 278 ; Blake's defeat leads to capitulation, 278 ; fall of, 293

St. Joseph's, a blockhouse on island in Lake Huron, 519, 524

St. Lawrence, a boundary of Lower Canada, 514 ; difficult navigation, 517 ; junction of, with the Richelieu, 518 ; head of navigation of, commanded by Kingston, 519 ; Americans in force on opposite shore, 519 ; capture of British posts at mouth of, would have ensured fall of Amherstburg, 532

St. Michael, heights of, at Burgos, enemy driven away, 573 ; Wellington removes cannon from, 585

St. Roman's Church (Burgos), mine sprung, 582

Salamanca, French Army retires to, after Sabugal, 113 ; Bessières' mistaken report of provision there, 151 ; drafts and recovered invalids waiting there to join Masséna, 152 ; Marmont withdraws towards, 179 ; Marmont retires to, 217 ; occupied by guerillas, 241 ; Dorsenne's forced marches on, 258, and leaves troops at, 269 ; under Duke of Ragusa, 349 ; Souham to join Marmont at, 349 ; Clausel relieved at, by Souham, 354 ; Marmont at, receives news of Barrié's peril at Ciudad Rodrigo, 355 ; Marmont concentrates at, after fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, 367 ; strong force of Montbrun's cavalry at, 370 ; Napoleon orders Marmont to fortify, and threaten Almeida, 373 ; Marmont leaves, 417, and retreats to, 420 ; Marmont's troops in cantonments at, 422 ; Wellington's choice for this or elsewhere, 432 ; Marmont intends to stay near, 441 ; Wellington reported to be likely to advance on, 442 ; Marmont to stand fast at, 442 ; Hill hears of Wellington's victory at, 456 ; Wellington within six miles of, 460 ; forts invested by him, 461 ; Marmont's design to occupy plateau near, 476 ; nature of country over which the two armies manoeuvre, 482 ; battle of, 485-504 ; Wellington north of, 608

Salvaterra, Slade's cavalry at, 230

Salvatierra de los Barros, Ballesteros retreats to, 142

San Bernardo, convent of, in Salamanca, guns placed in, 462

Sanchez, Don Julian, his guerillas retire before Fournier's cavalry at Fuentes, 161 ; joins Houston at Freineda, 165 ; foils the French in victualling Ciudad Rodrigo, 242 ; and his guerillas in charge of Wellington's northern front, 253 ; capture of cattle and Governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, 269 ; intercepts Barrié's letter to Marmont, 355

San Chidrian, 607

San Cristobal, strongest of works of Badajoz, 146-7 ; strong attack by Wellington, 221 ; operations before, 222 ; Houston's call for volunteers, 223 ; stormers retire, 223 ; badly damaged, 224 ; its strength, 384 ; Fifth Division recalled from, and replaced by a Portuguese brigade, 391

San Cristobal, Wellington's main army posted on heights of, near Salamanca, 461 ; army formed in order of battle, 462 ; Marmont's dangerous movements towards, 466 ; discontent in French Army at feeble demonstration before, and call for bold offensive, 472 ; Allies moved up to position of, 478 ; Wellington at, 608 ; Wellington's front on north at, 609

Sandwich, occupied by American General Hull, 525 ; regulars and militia sent by Brock to check raids from, 526

San Felices, Fourth Division at, 350

San Felipe, Suchet withdraws to, 565 ; Joseph's head-quarters at, 592 ; meeting with Soult at, 592

San Francisco, convent of, in Ciudad Rodrigo, fortified, 351 ; Light Division formed behind, 359

San Gaetano, one of forts of Salamanca, 461

Sanguesa, Abbé defeated by guerillas at, 436

San Ildefonso, mentioned, 557

San Isidro, Souham determines to force bridge at, 602

San Miguel, heights of, at Badajoz, strength and importance, 385-6

San Muñoz, Dorsenne reaches, 259 ; Wellington's retreat through, 618

San Pelayo gate, in Ciudad Rodrigo, feint before, 359

San Roque, Barrois moves on, 327 ; Barrois at, 328 ; Conroux watches Ballesteros at, 372 ; works at strengthened, 387 ; Soult's fear of Ballesteros coming from mountains of, 425 ; Ballesteros leaving to attack Soult, badly beaten, 448

Santa Catalina, a sandhill in Tarifa, 329 ; British troops at, 330 ; spot for embarkation from Tarifa, 336

Santa Cruz, convent of, in Ciudad Rodrigo, fortified, 351 ; taken by Wellington, retaken by French, 356 ; assailed by Scots Brigade and Fifth Foot, 358

Santa Eulalia, Beresford's army halts there, 123 ; Guards' brigade at, 233, note on ; Hill's troops distributed around, 270

Santa Maria, Wellington's right at ford of, 464

Santa Maria (Badajoz), bastions assaulted, 393-5
 Santa Marta, Beresford plans to drive back French rear-guard at, 138 ; Beresford joined at, by Fourth Division, 140 ; he designs to crush Maransin at, 142 ; Long retires to, before Soult, 182 ; Soult's cavalry reported at, 230 ; Wellington crosses ford of, 479 ; British Army hidden from Marmont by hills near, 481
 Santander, Longa and his guerillas against French in, 437 ; heavy cannon brought to Burgos from, 583
 Santa Olalla, Soult passes through, 182
 Santarem, Reynier advises Masséna to stay here, 34 ; Masséna's retreat from, 36 ; occupied by Wellington, 36 ; object of British advance from, achieved, 87 ; mentioned, 569
 Santi Petri, Zayas' bridge of boats over, 46, 47
 Santi Spiritus, Foy's desire to reach this before Wellington, 616
 Santocildes, General, sent to Astorga, 240 ; engagement at, 241 ; superseded by Abadia, 241 ; renders assistance to Wellington, 242 ; the only Spanish general in north of Spain to show enterprise, 249 ; sent by Castaños to invest Astorga, 470 ; asked to send troops to Esla, on Marmont's right rear, 471 ; Tordesillas surrenders to, 561 ; ordered to fall back to the Esla, 562 ; his erratic movements, 563-4 ; his position in relation to Valladolid, 591
 Santonja, Walker proposes to seize it as a port for British warships, 239
 San Vicente, one of the forts of Salamanca, 461 ; bombarded, 462 ; carried by assault, 465
 São João da Pesqueira, on the Douro, Wellington's northern limit of cantonment, 423
 Sappers and Miners, Wellington pleads for formation of a corps, 379
 Sardinia, conspiracy to shake off French yoke, 301
 Sarrut, General, to march on Cuenca, 348 ; cantonment at Toro, 422 ; at battle of Salamanca, 484, 495, 497-8
 Sarsfield, General, raids France from Puigcerda, 438 ; retreat covered by Eroles, 438 ; beats Bourre at Roda, 439
 Sarzedo, Reynier posts his troops on heights above, 88
 Scharnhorst, General Gerard (of Prussia), sent by Frederick William to negotiate the alliance with Russia, 283 ; makes a secret agreement with the Tsar, 284 ; sent to Vienna to ascertain Austria's intentions, 284
 Scheldt, sickness of British troops arrived from, 258
 Schwertfeger, note on Wellington's square on Montbrun's approach, 262 n. ; reference to fight at Arroyo Molinos, 275 n.
 Scott's Point, British force at, 537
 Sebastiani, General Horace (in Central Spain), confronted by insurgents in Murcia and Valencia, 11 ; his contingent joins Soult, 182
 Segovia, Joseph reaches, 550 ; quits, 551 ; Wellington at, 557 ; Napier's comments on a suggested march on by Wellington, 564
 Serra de São Mamede, Hill climbs, 271
 Serras, General, watches the frontier of Galicia, 240 ; driven from the Orvigo by Santocildes, 241
 Setubal, Wellington orders stores from, to Elvas, 369 ; guns landed at, for Wellington, 374 ; Dickson starts for Elvas with them, 375
 Severoli, General, his Italians form the nucleus of the Army of the Ebro, 434
 Seville, Soult marches on, and prepares for siege of Badajoz, 19 ; Soult concentrates at, and leaves an inadequate garrison, 182 ; Blake threatens, 231 ; Soult starts for, 237 ; Soult achieves nothing since his return to, 245 ; Blake fails to enter and destroy the stores, 249 ; Soult orders mortars to be cast at, for siege of Cadiz, 380 ; Soult's intention to quit, 391 ; Penne-Villemur, Morillo, and Ballesteros closing in on, 411 ; Soult sends forces to, 411 ; Soult reaches, 412 ; false report that Ballesteros had captured, 412 ; Soult's head-quarters, 422 ; open to Wellington, 432 ; Soult compelled to help garrison at, 445 ; to be threatened by Ballesteros, 446 ; reinforcements for d'Erlon to leave, delayed, 454 ; Soult's army concentrated at, 457 ; Murgeon drives out French, 570 ; capture of guns and stores, 571 ; mentioned, 592
 Shaw, Lieutenant, alone in the breach at Badajoz, 399
 Shawe, Major, of Seventy-fourth, in attack at Badajoz, 388-9
 Sheaffe, Colonel, brings up reserve to Brock at Queenston, 541-3
 Sicilian Parliament, ignored by King and Queen, 300 ; convoked, 555
 Sicily, to remain with the reigning House of Bourbon, 299 ; threat of revolution, 300 ; ferment in, when Bentinck landed, 301 ; Bentinck's scheme for, set before Wellesley, 303 ; Bentinck to lay down

terms to Ferdinand's Government, 304 ; Bentinck arrives and demands command of Army of Sicily, 305 ; its connection with the British Fleet off Xucar, 554 ; Bentinck desires to remodel the Government of, 555

Siege equipment lamentably lacking in British Army, 149

Siege-train, Wellington disembarks it on the Douro and carries it to Lamego—transport of by Dickson, and difficulties, 252 ; troubles with Portuguese Government over transport of, 376 ; at the siege of Burgos, and its inadequacy, 574

Sierra de Alcaraz, open to Ballesteros's retreat, if threatened by Joseph, 594

Sierra de Gata, Marmont marches over the, 259

Sierra de Mirabete, Hill at foot of, 425 ; road over to Truxillo, 426

Sierra de Montanchez, in line of Girard's retreat, 272

Sierra Morena, Beresford's purpose to drive Latour from, 140 ; Colborne harries French posts at, and compels withdrawal into Andalusia, 145 ; Soult can hardly believe that Wellington will entangle his army in the, 415 ; southern limit of Wellington's cantonments, 423

Silesia, promised by France to Austria, proposed also by Russia, 286

Silveira, General Francisco, attacks Claparéde, 32 ; Wellington's anger at his folly, 32 n. ; at Coimbra, 74 ; marches to Lamego, 416 ; his Portuguese militia retreat before Foy, 562

Simancas, Marmont's left at, 468 ; Clauseau keeps a force at, and blows up bridge at, 563 ; bridge secured by Wellington, 603 ; defended by Halkett, 604 ; bridge destroyed, 604

Skerrett, Colonel, brings British troops to strengthen garrison in Tarragona, 246 ; commands garrison at Tarifa, 330 ; applies to General Cooke for orders, 331 ; decides to abandon Tarifa, 332 ; Cooke reports his recall of, from Tarifa, 337 ; embarks at Cadiz and lands at Huelva to attack castle of Niebla, 570 ; halts at Alcala, joined by Cooke, and ordered to Truxillo, 571 ; joins Hill, 606

Slade, Major-general, encounters French cavalry between Alverca and Guarda, 97 ; pursues retreating columns who cross the Coa, 99 ; deplorable as a cavalry leader, 115 ; his blunders, 229 ; cavalry at Salvaterra, 230 ; in reserve at Arronches, 234 ; cavalry at Fuente-guinaldo, 264 ; skirmish at Aldea da Ponte, 266 ; supports Ponsonby's Light Dragoons in pursuit of Soult, 412 ; at Villafranca and Ribera, 413 ; defeat at Maguilla, 451 ; comment on his character, 452

Smith, Captain, at Tarifa, 329-32 ; praise due for defence of Tarifa, 336

Smith, Brigade-major Harry, at Badajoz, 402 ; romantic marriage, 404

Smyth, Brigadier, commands American forces at Buffalo, 537 ; refuses to reinforce Rensselaer, 541 ; succeeds Rensselaer in command, 543 ; endeavours to break British communications between Fort Erie and Chippewa, 544

Solana, Soult retreats to, after Albuera, 209 ; mentioned, 218 ; Spanish Army at, 220

Solignac, General, his division in Marmont's centre south of Fuentes, 157 ; in support of Marchand and Mermet at Fuentes, and moves southward, 160

Solsona, 248

Somerset, Lord Edward, Colonel, 493

Somerset, Lord Fitzroy, Wellington's Military Secretary, 29

Somosierra, a possible route for Wellington by the, 564

Sontag, General John, breaks down in health, 341

Sonto, Spencer halts at, 229 ; Wellington masses cavalry near, 267

Sortelha, mentioned, 95

Souham, General, reinforces Dorsenne, and given command of province of Burgos, 241 ; reinforces Marmont, 256 ; pursues Wellington via Forcalhos, but brought to a stand, 266 ; to join Marmont, 349 ; arrives at Tormes, 354 ; on the Douro and Esla, 380 ; in command of army of Portugal, pending Masséna's return, 595 ; unaware of Wellington's retreat, and turns in pursuit, 597 ; determines to cross the Pisuerga, 602 ; moves towards the bridge of Cabazon, 603 ; extends his right to Zaraton, 604 ; cavalry meets Joseph's flanking parties, 608 ; able to threaten Wellington's left flank, 608

Soult, Nicholas, Duke of Dalmatia, Marshal of France, blamed by Napoleon, 18 ; despatch intercepted and sent to Wellington, 19 ; preparations for siege of Badajoz, 19 ; advance on Badajoz, 20 ; attacks Olivenza, 21 ; invests Badajoz, joined by Gazan, 22 ; defeat of Men dizabal leaves him free to besiege Badajoz, 24 ; disregard of Napoleon's order to march to the Tagus, 31 ; operations before Badajoz frustrated by Menacho, 37 ; capture of Badajoz, 38 ; his brilliant

campaign, 38 ; nullified by his premature occupation of Andalusia, 39 ; Wellington cancels expedition against, 87 ; moving on Campo Maior, 120 ; invests Campo Maior, 121 ; after Barrosa had retreated to Seville, 121 ; advance on Badajoz guarded against by Blake and Ballesteros, 142 ; fails to take measures for rescue of Badajoz, 181 ; his three possible roads, 182 ; army within striking distance of Beresford, 187 ; battle of Albuera, 187-205 ; transports his wounded to Seville, 209 ; retreat to Solana, estimate of his dispositions, 210 ; retreat begun, 217 ; carries his wounded to Llerena, 218 ; cavalry reported at Santa Marta, 230 ; in touch with Marmont at Merida, 231 ; wishes to return to Seville, 236 ; Marmont protests, 237 ; starts for Seville, 237 ; Wellington breaks his combination with Marmont, 242 ; marches to Granada to manœuvre against Freire's post, 243 ; force against Ballesteros badly beaten, 244 ; returns to Granada, 244 ; instructs d'Erlon to neutralise Hill, 270 ; meditating a return to Estremadura, 271 ; to aid Suchet in reduction of Alicante and Cartagena, 294 ; purposes joining Suchet, 326 ; prepares for capture of Tarifa, 327 ; Wellington's comment on Soult's wastage of troops, 337 ; nervous over Hill's movements, 371 ; urges Marmont to demonstrate towards Merida and Truxillo, 371 ; hears of fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, reorganises his army, 371 ; asks for reinforcements, 372 ; ordered by Napoleon to reinforce d'Erlon at Merida to check Hill, 373 ; threatened with famine, 374 ; Marmont to second him on the Guadiana, and invaded Galicia, 378 ; arrangements to distract him, 379 ; before Cadiz, 380 ; sends troops to Burgos for Napoleon, 381 ; at Cadiz, 382 ; his force in Estremadura, 382 ; watched by Graham, 383 ; moves towards Badajoz, 391 ; reported at Llerena, 393 ; artillery crosses the Guadalquivir, 411 ; falls back to Llerena on hearing of fall of Badajoz, 411 ; reaches Seville, 412 ; believes Wellington means to invade Andalusia, 415 ; retreat from Llerena, 418 ; hampered by Napoleon's orders, 421 ; head-quarters at Seville, 422 ; alarmed at Hill's approach, 425 ; obsessed with the idea that Wellington would attack in force, 429 ; want of provisions hampers his movements, 430 ; strength after rearrangement of French armies in Spain, 434 ; to send force under d'Erlon to

Guadiana, 439 ; responsible for country south of Tagus, 440 ; declines to obey Joseph, 442 ; attack on Marmont, 443 ; desires to be relieved of his command, 443 ; does not resign when Joseph assents, 444 ; fortifying the line of the Guadelete at Bornos, 448 ; reinforces d'Erlon, 453 ; orders d'Erlon to prevent British advance by valley of Tagus, 454 ; making for Granada, 457 ; consideration of his inactivity in Seville, 458 ; his resentment against Joseph, 459 ; slight towards Joseph, 469 ; uncompromising negative to Joseph's messages, 470 ; ordered by Joseph to proceed to Toledo, 551 ; Wellington in doubt as to movements of, 566 ; discussion of his contentions, 568 ; called on by Joseph to obey or resign, 569 ; withdraws from Cadiz, 571 ; his route, 571 ; stormy interview with Joseph, 592 ; marches to Ocaña, 593 ; attacks Puenta Larga, 606 ; fails to meet Hill at the Jarama, 607 ; advanced guard at Madrid and Escorial, 608 ; suggests turning Wellington's right, 612 ; does not engage Wellington, 615-16 ; criticism of his excessive circumspection, 624

Soult, Pierre (Baron), goes to Rey's aid at Malaga, 412 ; his horse joins d'Erlon, 453 ; not to cross the Guadiana, 454 ; his light infantry leads the way across the Tormes, 613

Sousa, Jose de (the Principal in the Portuguese Regency), factious obstruction of Wellington, 28 ; Wellington displaces him from Council of Regency, 376

Spain, insurrection vigorously alive, 8 ; failure of combinations of French armies against British, 11 ; distribution of French armies in, 11-12 ; Joseph complains of disobedience of generals, 13 ; Napoleon sweeps away six military governments in Northern Spain, 14 ; these under sole command of Bessières, 15 ; a mill-stone about Napoleon's neck, 282 ; recall of Imperial Guard and Polish troops from, 296

Spanish Government, selfish policy in throwing responsibility of Badajoz on Wellington, 423 ; tardy despatch of a Spanish regiment to Badajoz, 424 ; contemplate reconquest of South America, but Douglas intervenes, 436

Specie, dearth of, in Wellington's army, and reasons for, 342 ; serious effect on food supply and transport for army, 343 ; the old difficulty in enterprise against Badajoz, 378 ; Wellington's action, 378 ; Bentinck's action aggravates trouble,

450 ; Bentinck takes away all from Gibraltar, 470

Spencer, Lieutenant-general Sir Brent, Wellington's second in command, 115 ; joined by Wellington at Alameda, 150 ; in command of army on the Agueda, 217 ; fails to check Marmont in provisioning Ciudad Rodrigo, 229 ; want of foresight, 230 ; mentioned, 231 ; chagrin at being superseded by Graham, 254

Spry, Brigadier, at Salamanca, 491, 496

Stanhope, Colonel James, at Badajoz, 400 ; leaves the army, 471 ; arrives at Burgos, and his comment on the trenches, 586-7 ; conversation with a French officer, 590 ; records Gordon's incapacity, 611

Stewart, Colonel, commands a column in Hill's night attack on Girard, 273

Stewart, Charles, Adjutant-general, captures Lamotte at Fuentes, 162 ; letter to Castlereagh as to battlefield of Albuera, 212

Stewart, Major-general, Hon. W., succeeds Hill in command of Second Division, 29 ; leaves Talavera Real and invests Badajoz, 144 ; at Albuera, 184 sq. ; wounded, 200 ; his brigades lost sight of by Beresford, 211 ; mutinous conduct of, 620

Stirling's brigade, in assault at Burgos, 574

Strenowitz, Lieutenant, fight at Maguilla, 453

Stuart, Mr. Charles, British Minister at Lisbon, his difficulties with Portuguese Regency, 28

Stubbs, General, at Salamanca, 494-6

Sturgeon, Major, his engineering achievement at Alcantara, 431

Suchet, General Louis Gabriel, in command of Army of Aragon, 11 ; success in siege of Tortosa, 16 ; ordered to besiege Tarragona, 16 ; preparations for siege, 17 ; his army not diverted from its task, 18 ; undertakes siege of Tarragona, 245 ; carries Tarragona by assault, 247 ; to Vich to restore communication with Macdonald, 248 ; to Montserrat, which he storms and captures, 248 ; operations on east coast of Spain, 277 ; capture of Sagunto, 278 ; his rear threatened by guerillas, 279 ; to take Valencia, 292 ; proceeds to siege of Valencia, 338 ; report of prisoners taken at Valencia, 339 n. ; harassed by guerillas, 348 ; Wellington hears of his triumph at Valencia, 369 ; no apprehension as to, 379 ; kept busy by guerillas, 379 ; strengthened at Marmont's expense, 420 ; to send Palombini's Italians to Army of North, 434 ; loses Freire's division, 434 ; Joseph applies to, for reinforcements, 440 ; regrets he cannot oblige Joseph, 442 ; to make a diversion in Murcia, 442 ; to be occupied by Bentinck with troops from Sicily, 447 ; insolence to Joseph, 469 ; Joseph clamours for one of his divisions, 554 ; unable to detach men westward so long as Maitland was on the coast, 557 ; withdraws to San Felipe, 565 ; peril in Wellington's operations against, by weakening the Army of Portugal, 588 ; opinion as to opening communications with Army of Portugal, 592

Superior, Lake, on American frontier, 519

Supply, Bissett's account of organisation of, in Wellington's army, 344 ; lines of, in Canada, during war with U.S., 517

Sweden, Napoleon's mistake regarding, 8 ; Swede's request for Bernadotte as the successor to Charles XIII. ignored by Napoleon, 8 ; crown offered to Eugéne, but refused, 8 ; Bernadotte appointed, 8 ; France's need to conciliate or induce to neutrality, 286 ; Napoleon's failure, 286

Tagus, impassable, 96 ; crossed by bridge of boats by Allies, 230 ; crossed by Marmont, 231 ; Marmont withdraws from Badajoz to valley of, 238 ; Foy to cross, 256 ; d'Erlon sends Girard to close space between, and the Guadiana, 270 ; Foy crosses, 347 ; Foy thinks Marmont should strike at Valencia and return to, 348 ; Wellington knows Marmont to be in valley of, 349 ; Marmont in valley of, 355 ; Napoleon's censure on Marmont for keeping his division there, 373 ; dépôt for clothing on, 379 ; Hill watches Marmont on, 383 ; Alten crosses, 417 ; Foy's cantonments on, 422 ; Soult wishes Marmont to manœuvre against left flank in, 425 ; Foy and Joseph to create a diversion in valley of, 440 ; Marmont deprecates employing his troops south of, 441 ; British troops quit the south bank for ever, 457 ; Wellington reduces the French on both sides to one brigade at Toledo, 460 ; Hill on, 593 ; impassable through flood, 594

Tahibilla, Victor's siege guns reach, from Tarifa, 335

Tajuna river, 606

Talavera, Montbrun remains at, 349 ; troops marching with Montbrun to concentrate at, 367 ; Foy at, to follow Marmont, 383 ; Joseph sends supplies to,

440 ; Darmagnac to keep his detachment there, 442 ; Hill at, 571

Talaya, Major (Portuguese), heroic defence of Campo Maior, 121

Tallyrand - Perigord, Prince de Bénévent, Charles Maurice, urged by Napoleon to bribe Poland, but declines, 288

Tamames, Montbrun reaches, 259 ; Marmont thinks to cut off Wellington's communications with, 486 ; Foy's wish to pursue by, 616 ; Wellington takes up position at, 618

Tarancón, Army of Centre at, 593 ; Joseph at, 605

Tarascon, Sarsfield levies contributions on town, 438

Tarazona, Marmont's march to, 476

Tardajón, Wellington's retreat to, 596

Tardajos, mentioned, 597 n.

Tariego, Wellington destroys bridge at, 601 ; Souham determines to cross the Pisuerga at bridge reported to be in his hands, 602 ; Souham captures it, 602

Tarifa, sea sortie from Cadiz, 41 ; troops enter, 41 ; Godinot on road to, is driven off by cruisers' guns, 244 ; a possible refuge for Ballesteros, 326 ; Soult decides to attack, 326 ; Victor in command of attack, 327 ; Victor's troops debouch into plains of, 328 ; description of, and defences, 328-9 ; siege of, 330-4 ; Victor's retreat from, 335 ; French and British losses, 335 ; defence creditable to British, 336 ; Campbell's suggestion of consequences if Soult had taken, 337 ; Napier's prejudice in Campbell's favour, 338 n. ; Wellington hears of Victor's failure at, 369 ; Ballesteros retires to, 381 ; Soult not to spend time in siege of, 442

Tarragona, Napoleon orders Suchet to besiege, 16 ; Suchet undertakes the siege, 245 ; taken by assault, 247 ; army to crush guerilla bands extends from, to Oviedo, 434 ; Bentinck to lay siege to, 447 ; Maitland to defend, 556

Tecumseh, Indian warrior prophet, attacks Americans, 322 ; asked by Brock to drive Americans from Detroit, 530

Tejares, Marmont concludes that Wellington is retreating to, 481

Teso de San Miguel, mentioned, 483 ; Cole's division on the, 484

Thiébault, General Paul Charles, his division, 262 ; discovers that Wellington has deserted his camp, and pursues, 266 ; tells Marmont that Wellington intends to take offensive at Ciudad Rodrigo, 354

Thomières, General, cantonment at Zamora, 422 ; at battle of Salamanca, 484-8

Thompson, Captain George, afterwards Major, his ill-advised generosity to Portuguese at Estremoz, 138 ; recalled, 139 ; his battery shatters Montbrun's cavalry, 166 ; silences French guns at Ciudad Rodrigo, 362

Thornton (Mr.), English Minister in Stockholm, 286

Tietar, Marmont holds strong bridge-head at, 238 ; Brennier crosses, 347

Tilly, General, his dragoons cross the Tormes, 613-14

Tilsit, Alliance of, Napoleon declares it a thing of the past, 9 ; Peace of, releases French Army for enforcement of Berlin Decree, 312

Tilson, Major-general, returns to Spain, now known as Chowne, 342

Toledo, d'Erlon at, 231 ; Foy at, 268 ; Foy ordered from, to Cuenca, 347 ; French compelled to use bridge at, on destruction of that at Almaraz, in relieving Badajoz, 370 ; French bridge between, and Portuguese frontier, 424 ; communication between armies of Portugal and South driven back to bridge of, 430 ; only bridge left to French on the Tagus, 460 ; Soult ordered to, 551 ; mentioned, 568 ; abandoned by French and occupied by guerillas, 571 ; Hill at, 571 ; Hill between Fuentidueña and, 593 ; mentioned, 606

Tomkinson, Colonel, does not bear out Napier's comments on Clauseau's retreat, 564 ; his testimony to Cocks, 580 ; criticism of Gordon, 611 ; criticism of differences between French and British usages, 622

Tordesillas, Marmont falls back on, 467 ; makes it his centre, 468 ; his army massed at, and Douro crossed, 473 ; French post at, isolated, 552 ; Wellington orders Santocildes to blockade, 552 ; surrenders to Santocildes, 561 ; Foy moves to, 562 ; occupied by Clauseau, 563 ; bridge at, secured by Wellington, 603 ; Halkett springs a mine at bridge, 604 ; garrison at, 609

Tormes river, Dorsenne to join Marmont on, 256 ; Clauseau marches from upper, 348 ; French division on, 354 ; concentration of French Army on, 369 ; Bonnet's division on, 380 ; Marmont leaves for the Agueda, 392 ; Marmont in full retreat for, 420 ; French cavalry at, 422 ; driven across, and bridges broken down, 460 ; British Army fords the river, 460-1 ; Marmont threatens Wellington's communications, 464 ; he and Wellington racing for, 477 ; crossed by Wellington's forces at Huerta, 499 ; Bock crosses at

Alba in pursuit of French, 499 ; Hill crosses at Alba, 608 ; Wellington's preference for cantonments on, 611 ; Soult crosses, 613

Toro, Sarrut at, 422 ; Marmont falls back on, 467 ; repairs bridge at, 471 ; Bonnet crosses and is recalled, 473 ; Wellington orders Santocildes to blockade, 552 ; Clauseau leaves garrison at, 561 ; Foy withdraws garrison, 562 ; Wellington destroys bridge at, 605 ; garrison at, 609

Toronto, seat of Government of Upper Canada. *See York*

Torquemada, Clauseau halts at, 551 ; retires to, 564 ; Wellington's retreat to, 597 ; his rear-guard reaches, 599 ; French cross the Pisuerga at, 601 ; Wellington destroys the bridge, 601

Torrecilla de la Orden, reinforcements at for Cotton, 473 ; Wellington orders retirement by, 473 ; returns to, 607

Torre de Mouro, Hamilton in woods opposite, 233 ; mentioned, 234

Torremocha, Girard making for, and Hill fails to intercept him, 272

Torrens, Lieutenant-colonel Henry, Military Secretary at Horse Guards, his assistance at home to Wellington, 25-6 ; seeks to meet Wellington's need for capable officers, 342 ; result, 342

Torre Peña, Victor carries guns from Tarifa to, 335

Tortosa, siege of, 15 ; Suchet quits, 277

Trabancos, Marmont at, 467 ; Wellington returns to line of, 607

Trancosa, Wellington's siege-train taken to, 252

Transport, British superiority to French in organisation of, 226 ; difficulty of French, 254 ; Bissett's account of Wellington's, 344-5

Transport Corps, Napoleon's organisation of, for Peninsula, 292

Trant, Colonel Sir Nicholas, co-operates with Bacellar against Claparède, 32 ; at Coimbra, but ordered to fall back to Vouga if seriously attacked, 74 ; retires from Coimbra, 80 ; Coa in flood prevents retreat, 112 ; Wellington's orders to, 113 ; engages French at Val de la Mulla, 113 ; marches to Lamego, 416 ; meets d'Espana, 416 ; march to Guarda and Celorico, 417 ; abandons project by surprising Marmont at Sabugal, 418 ; false rumours of disaster at Guarda, 419

Treilhard, General, sent by Joseph to follow d'Erlon's corps, 469 ; orders from Joseph, 557 ; driven back to Las Rozas, 558 ; crosses the Formes, 613

Truxillo, Marmont's troops reported at, 230 ; Marmont at, 231 ; Foy sent from to create diversion in pass of Perales, 268 ; Foy's diversion there, 270 ; mentioned, 273 ; Girard attempts to head for, 274 ; Soult urges Marmont to demonstrate towards, 371 ; bridge fortified to guard main road to, 426 ; Hill retires to, to avoid being cut off by Soult, 429 ; Hill quits for Merida, 450 ; mentioned, 571

Tudela, Duran destroys Suchet's guns at, 437 ; way to, open to Souham, 602

Turkey to be conciliated by Napoleon, or neutralised, 286 ; encouraged by France and Austria to keep Russia occupied, 287 ; urged by Prussia, Austria, and France, 288

Turones, a stream at one end of battle-ground of Fuentes de Oñoro, 155 ; *n.* as to endless spelling of this name, 155 *n.*

Upper Canada, its boundaries, 514 ; population of, largely Loyalists, 514 ; American advantage so great as to be able to compel evacuation of, 520

Urbel river, Wellington's retreat across, 596

Usagre, Girard's troops meet Spanish and Portuguese cavalry at, covering Mendizabal's retreat, 20 ; French rear-guard falls back to, 218 ; fight at, 218-20 ; mentioned, 453

United States, prejudice against standing army, 307 ; sympathy with Revolutionary France against England alienated by Jacobin excesses, 308 ; Act passed, declaring war against England, 514 ; Loyalists in Canada driven there after War of Independence, 515 ; advantage on the frontier, and preparations for war, 521 ; war declared, 529 ; unreadiness for war, 534 ; all war material sent up to Sackett's Harbour by water, 535 ; failure in the war accentuates bitterness between the two parties in, 548

Valdemoro, Joseph halts at, 559 ; Spaniards in Second Line at, 606 ; Soult advances to, 607

Valencia, Campoverde's cavalry march to, 247 ; Suchet ordered to take, 248 ; to be captured by Suchet, and Marmont to reinforce him, 293 ; presumed importance of capture of, 294 ; Suchet invests, 338 ; Suchet enters, 339 ; Wellington's fear lest fall will afford pretext at home for withdrawing from Spain, 346 ; its capture means danger for Cartagena, 347 ; Marmont marches for, 355 ; guerilla leaders keep Suchet employed at, 388 ;

Napoleon's false impression of value of, 420 ; Suchet returns to, and Blake's army near, 554 ; Joseph arrives, 559 ; Maitland proceeds towards, 565 ; Soult contemplates march to, 566 ; Joseph retires to, 571 ; *see "Andalusia,"* 589

Valencia de las Tormes, d'Erlon falls back to, 456

Valencia di Alcantara, found abandoned by Latour-Maubourg, 122 ; rendered defenceless, 122 ; Hill's Spanish troops at, 270

Valladolid, drafts and recovered invalids waiting to join Masséna, 152 ; d'Erlon at, 231 ; Young Guard cantoned at, 240 ; attacked by guerillas, 241 ; French infantry marching north from, 348 ; Marmont to make it his head-quarters and administrative, 349 ; Marmont's head-quarters, 370 ; Ferey at, 422 ; Army of the Ebro to maintain communication with various armies there, 434 ; guerilla victory near, 436 ; Clausel eager to reach before Wellington, 550 ; Wellington enters, 552 ; Clausel leaves great stores and wounded at, 553 ; Clausel moves on, 562 ; and occupies, 563 ; Wellington moves on, 563 ; conditions under which Joseph would not have advanced on, 591 ; bridge secured by Wellington, 603 ; Foy repulsed in forcing the bridges, 604 ; bridges destroyed, 604, 605 ; garrison at, 609

Valle d'Espinto, Wellington's Fifth Division thrown out to, 267

Vallesa, British Army forms at, 457 ; Wellington moves to heights of, 476

Valletaux, General, sent to strengthen Serras, 240 ; killed in attacking Santocildes, 241

Valmusa rivulet, Wellington at, 460

Valverde, Beresford plans advance on, and to return to Badajoz, 138 ; Godinot marches to, and thence towards Seville, 237 ; Graham at, 383

Vandeleur, General, at Ciudad Rodrigo, 359 ; wounded, 366

Veiland, General, leads French charge in Badajoz, beaten back, 386

Vejer, French dragoons retire on approach of Allies, 45 ; Victor reaches, 328 ; part of Victor's siege-train arrives, 335

Velmez, d'Erlon's rear-guard passes through, 457

Venda da Cruz, French Eighth Corps at, 70

Venta del Pozo, action at, 598

Vera de Plasencia, Marmont withdraws from Badajoz to, 238

Vermont, militia of, able to invade Canada and Nova Scotia, 309

Vich, Suchet marches to, 248

Victor, Claude Perrin, Marshal (Duke of Belluno), detained before Cadiz, 11 ; orders Cassagne to Medina Sidonia, his perilous position, 43 ; prevents Zayas from co-operating with Lapeña, 46 ; advances to meet Lapeña, 51 ; his part in fight for Barrosa Hill, 55 ; retreats, and retires to Chiclana, 60 ; proposes another action behind Chiclana, 66 ; resolve to retreat on Seville, 66 ; his contingent joins Soult, 182 ; sent against Ballesteros, 244 ; expedition to Tarifa, 327 ; leaves Cadiz for Vejer, 328 ; at Vejer, 332 ; orders fresh attack on Tarifa, 334 ; raises the siege, 335 ; Wellington hears of his failure at Tarifa, 369

Villaba, Soult reaches, 411

Villaboa, Pack's brigade at, 267

Villa Campa, guerilla chief, captures 300 French, 561

Villacastin, Hill takes route by, 605 ; and moves to, 607 ; Soult's advanced guard at, 608

Villa Cortes, Arentschild's and Slade's cavalry halt at, in pursuit of Masséna, 92

Villa da Ponte, Dickson establishes dépôt at, 252 ; mentioned, 268

Villa de Buniel, Wellington orders retreat through, 596 and n. ; Wellington's army rests at, during retreat, 597

Villafranca, Soult in contact with Long's cavalry outposts, 182 ; French rear-guard falls back from, to Usagre, 218 ; Soult at, 231 ; Graham at, to hinder Soult, 391 ; Soult leaving, hears of fall of Badajoz, 411 ; Slade and Ponsonby at, 413 ; Hill at, 451

Villagarcia, d'Erlon's cavalry bivouacked in a wood at, 413 ; rout of Lallemand, 414 ; French and British losses, 415

Villagonzalo, Jourdan proposes to cross the Tormes at, to pierce Wellington's centre, 612

Villalon, British retreat on, 596 and n. ; also 597 n.

Villa Muriel, Wellington commands bridge at, and destroys it, 601 ; Maucune's reconnaissances towards, and bridge blown up, 602 ; Campbell retires on, 602 ; bridge blown up, 603

Villanueva, Suchet seizes Campoverde's dépôt and ships at, 247 ; d'Erlon at, 423

Villanueva de Gomez, Hill marches on, 607

Villanueva de la Serena, mentioned, 457 ; Hill's head-quarters at, 571

Villar de Ciervos, Royal Dragoons delay Brennier's retreat at, 177

Villar Maior, Wellington's possible line of retreat from Fuentes, 157 ; Wellington's Seventh Division at, 253

Villaruela, mentioned, 609

Villa Toro, Anson to retreat through, 596 and n. ; see note on 597 for misprint

Villatte, General, ordered by Victor to bar road against Zayas, 46 ; attacked by Lardizabal, retires to creek of Almanza, 48

Villa Velha, Allies at, 230 ; Alten crosses the Tagus at, 417 ; Burgoyne to remove bridge of boats at, 418 ; long march avoided by erection of bridge at Alcantara, 431

Villemur, Spanish General Penne, brigade of cavalry on right flank at Albuera, 188 ; his cavalry at Albuera, 211 ; reoccupies Alisada, and drives out French from Arroyo del Puereo, 272

Ville Viçosa, Hill's troops around, 270

Villodrigo defile, Germans retire to, 598

Vimeiro, mentioned, 467

Vinho, Ney's head-quarters, 92 ; arrival of British cavalry at, 92 ; Masséna calls a halt, 92

Vitoria, army recalled from, to France, 296 ; Caffarelli's strength at, 594 ; Caffarelli summoned from, 595

Volunteers (in U.S.), called for, and organised on model of Regular Army, 521

Vrooman's Point, or Scott's Point, English force at, 537 ; American night attackers captured, 539 ; cannonade sinks American boat, 541

Walcheren Expedition, questions on, raised in Parliament, 3 ; Wellington reinforced by troops from, 340

Walker, General, British agent at Coruña, proposes to seize port of Santoña as haven for British warships, 239 ; at Badajoz, 402-3

Wallace, Lieutenant-colonel Alexander, half his brigade at Pastores, the other half at El Boden, 260 ; with Pakenham, 487 ; charges and dissolves French columns at Salamanca, 489-90 ; in pursuit, 492 ; carries everything before him, 507

Walsh, Ensign, saves the Buffs' colours, 208

Warsaw, Diet at, called by Abbé de Pradt, proclaims re-establishment of Poland, 289

Washington, George, first President of U.S., ratified Jay's Treaty, 307

Wathier, General, crosses the Azava, 259 ; charged by retiring British squadrons, 260 ; pursues Wellington via Aldea da Ponte, 266

Way, Major (afterwards Colonel), wounded at Albuera, 201 ; fine conduct at Albuera, 213

Wellesley, Richard, Marquess, resigns Foreign Office, 280 ; approves Bentinck's Italian scheme, but deprecates force against Court of Palermo, 304 ; negotiates with Pinkney, and favours importation of American produce into British Islands, 318 ; declines to yield to Napoleon's terms on blockade, 319 ; sends a new Minister to Washington, 320

Wellington, Viscount Arthur Wellesley (afterwards Duke of), appreciation of, in the Regent's speech from Throne, 4 ; hears of withdrawal of enemy from Cadiz, 19 ; advises revictualling of Abrantes, 19 ; scathing criticism of Spaniards for not following his advice, 24 ; difficulty of assisting Spaniards after Mendizabal's defeat, 25 ; his anxieties, 25 ; Torrens' assistance at home, 25 ; his generals and "leave of absence," 25 ; discontent concerning reinforcements and specie, 26 ; his denunciation of Portuguese Commissariat, 27 ; resents conduct of Bishop of Oporto and Sousa, 28 ; loss of Bathurst as Military Secretary, 29 ; endeavours to pen in Masséna, 29 ; his plans lead to Masséna's isolation, 30 ; Masséna, bridging the Tagus, compels him to throw up batteries opposite Punhete, 31 ; fear of political crisis in England, 33 ; awaiting reinforcements, 35 ; decides on general attack on Masséna, and his plan, 35 ; reaches Torres Novas, 36 ; orders Beresford to Badajoz, 37 ; Ney expects an attack from, 71 ; advance to confront Masséna, 73 ; joined by his whole army, advances, 74 ; fight at Redinha, 75 ; French accuse him of undue caution, 76-7 ; pursues Masséna, 78-9 ; within touch of French rear posts at Miranda do Corvo, 81 ; surprise attack on Ney, and French panic, 84 ; perfection of his transport, 86 ; abates pursuit because of commissariat difficulties, 87 ; receives reinforcements, 88 ; renews the pursuit of Masséna, and throws army across the Ceira, 89 ; French to be held before Ponte da Murcella, 89 ; pursuit of Masséna, 91 ; at Moita, 92 ; complaints from England of expense of war, 94 ; awaits supplies, 97 ; British forces before Guarda, 97-8 ; brings up army to face Masséna at Coa, 100 ; battle of Sabugal, 101-8 ; his

generals, 110-12 ; follows up the enemy, 112 ; shifts his head-quarters to Villar Maior, 112 ; held up, 113 ; has not disembarked his siege-train, 113 ; his Portuguese campaign, 115 ; complaint of his burdens through inefficiency of his leaders, 116 ; suspicious of British Cabinet, 117 ; proclamation to Portuguese people, 118 ; unwitting injustice to Liverpool and Perceval, 119 ; want of confidence in his officers, 121 ; leaves Sabugal and arrives at Elvas, 142 ; asks Beresford to report as to siege resources at Elvas, 143 ; furnishes memorandum for engineers for siege of Badajoz, 144 ; fails to send British siege-train to Badajoz, and hence failure, 148 ; rough and ready methods of his siege operations, 149 ; news of French entering Ciudad Rodrigo, 150 ; arrives at Alameda, 150 ; sends baggage to rear on Masséna's approach, 153 ; strength before Ciudad Rodrigo, 154 ; chooses position for battle of Fuentes de Oñoro, 156-7 ; disposition of his army, 157 ; fresh disposition to counter Masséna in second attack, 160 ; sacrifices his communications with the Coa, 164 ; movements which changed his line of battle, 164 ; French attack on his right wing dies away, 167 ; completes his field-works after Fuentes, 170 ; his losses, 171 ; his confession after the battle, 173 ; comments, 174-5 ; dispositions for dealing with Almeida criticised, 176 ; wrath and mortification at Brennier's escape, 178 ; sends support to Beresford in Alemtejo, and follows, 179 ; criticises Beresford's failure at Albuera, 189 ; scathing criticism of Beresford, 210 ; the position of Albuera, 212 ; to the Guadiana, 216 ; caustic description of Beresford's proceedings, 216 ; prepares against time for siege of Badajoz, 221 ; despairs of success, 223 ; orders to raise siege, 225 ; losses, 225 ; his difficulties—engineers' faulty plans, 226 ; annoyed at Spencer's movements and destruction of Almeida fortifications, 230 ; crosses the Guadiana, 231 ; Marmont and Soult combine to meet him, 231 ; enemy's superiority in numbers, 232 ; disposition of his army, 232-3 ; French reconnaissance does not reveal his real strength, 236 ; suspicions between French marshals ease his position, 237 ; into cantonments at Portalegre, 238 ; scheme for diversion in North Spain, 239 ; sends Santocildes to Astorga, and Cabrera to Le Bañeza, 240 ; arrives on the Agueda, 242 ; breaks

up Soult's and Marmont's combination, 242 ; disappointment with Spanish generals, 249 ; moves head-quarters to Fuenteguinaldo, 250 ; decides on siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, 251 ; estimate of Marmont's and Bessières's army, 251 ; intercepts Marmont's letters calling for increased transport, 254 ; intercepts French papers, and divines Marmont's movements, 256 ; reasons for discrediting Napoleon's plan for invasion of England, 257 ; numerical inferiority to Marmont, 258 ; brings up Fourth Division to Fuenteguinaldo, 259 ; waits to see which road Montbrun will take, 260 ; sends force to stop him on western road, 260 ; disposition of forces to meet Montbrun's advance, 261 ; orders retreat to prevent being surrounded, 262 ; extricates Third Division with little loss, 263 ; peril increased by Crawford's disobedience, 264 ; retreat south from Fuenteguinaldo, 265 ; drives French out of Aldea da Ponte, 266 ; his disposition for battle on the Coa, 267 ; results of campaign, 269 ; instructs Hill as to retreat if necessary, 270 ; consents to Hill joining Castaños to strike at Girard, 271 ; commands Hill's handsome victory at Arroyo Molinos, 276 ; comment on the Treaty of Bucharest, 288 ; Napoleon's wrong estimate of his strength, 293-4 ; declines to be called into quarrel between Cooke and Campbell, 337 ; foresees disaster at Valencia, 339 ; reinforced on the Agueda, 340 ; sickness among his troops, 340 ; strength of army, 341 ; development of divisional organisation, 341 ; difficulties through dearth of generals, 342 ; resignation of Commissioner Kennedy, 343 ; his plans, 345 ; fears lest he should be withdrawn from Spain, 346 ; deprecates hasty combination against France and withdrawal from Spain, 346 ; puzzled by Marmont's movements, 348 ; orders attack on Ciudad Rodrigo, 349 ; movement of his troops, 350 ; siege and capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, 353-65 ; Marmont's tribute to his swiftness, 367 ; hears of Victor's failure at Tarifa, and Suchet's success at Valencia, 369 ; troops in cantonments, 370 ; desert between him and Marmont, 374 ; head-quarters shifted from Gallegos to Freineda, 375 ; applies to fleet for guns, 375 ; refuses to yield to Castaños' proposal as to Ballesteros, 377 ; complains of entrenching and cutting tools supplied, 379 ; moves southwards, 379 ; anticipates Marmont's move-

ments, 380 ; quits Freineda and reaches Portalegre, 382 ; receives an earldom, 382 ; expects diversion towards Galicia and Northern Portugal, 383 ; besieges Badajoz, 384 ; anxious at floods cutting off his supplies and reinforcements, 387 ; letter to Graham, 387 ; disquieting news of Soult, 391 ; fears for safety of Ciudad Rodrigo, 392 ; greater vigour in siege of Badajoz, 392 ; determines to offer battle to Soult at Albuera, 393 ; orders renewed attack, 402 ; storm of Badajoz, 403-10 ; intention to drive Soult out of Andalusia frustrated by Spanish procrastination, 411 ; wishes Soult to believe he intends to invade Andalusia, 412 ; watches Marmont's advance on Ciudad Rodrigo, 415 ; assumption that Marmont would not cross the Coa, 416 ; moving north, 418 ; threatens to cut off Marmont from Salamanca, 419 ; halts on hearing of Marmont in full retreat for the Tormes, 420 ; discussion of his strokes against Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, 421 ; serious warning to Spanish Government, 423 ; cantons his army, 423 ; freedom to move at his will, 430 ; determines to improve navigation of Douro and Tagus, 431 ; upsets Napoleon's plans by assuming offensive, 436 ; in strength north of Tagus, 442 ; plans made, 444 ; his object, to keep French armies dispersed, 445 ; his measures for diverting French armies, 446 ; sends battering train to Bentinck at Tarragona, 447 ; his annoyances, 448 ; troubles because of want of specie, 450 ; operations in Castile, 457 ; fails to foresee Soult's apathy, 458 ; reaches the Valmusa, 460 ; cavalry drive French across the Tormes, 460 ; invests Salamanca, 461 ; difficulties, 461 ; changes his front to meet Marmont's new position, 464 ; replies to critics as to his action at Salamanca, 465-6 ; follows Marmont, 467 ; new disposition before Marmont, 468 ; anxiety, 470 ; doubt as to Joseph's movements, 471 ; concentrates on the Guareña, 473 ; right flank turned by Marmont, 476 ; both armies racing for the Tormes, 476 ; turns west to Aldearrubia, 477 ; prepares to retire into Portugal, 478 ; crosses bridge at Salamanca, 479 ; mixed army at Salamanca, 481, also n. on 481 and 482 ; dispositions for battle of Salamanca, 484 ; holds back divisions till Pakenham engages, 490 ; menaces French right flank, 496 ; contemptuous comment on Marmont's manœuvres,

503 ; French generals assumed his impotence for offensive, 504 ; comment on Cotton at Salamanca, 507 ; his swiftness in taking advantage of Marmont's errors of judgment, 507 ; criticism on his personal direction at Salamanca, 509, 510 ; thanks to his officers after Salamanca, and praise of civil departments, 512 ; his halt in pursuit criticised, 551 ; pursuit resumed, 552 ; puzzled by Joseph's desertion of Clausel, 552 ; hampered by sickness of troops and want of money, 553 ; booty in Valladolid, 553 ; his choice of action, 553, 554 ; designs Maitland's defence of Tarragona, 556 ; hears of O'Donnell's defeat at Castalla, 556 ; orders Ross to join Maitland, 556 ; resolves to march on Madrid, 557 ; passes the Douro, 563 ; his rear moves to Cabezon, 563 ; prepares to attack Clausel, who retreats, 564 ; consideration of a route by the Somosierra and Aranda de Duero, 564 ; discussion of the question, 565 ; forbids Maitland's re-embarkation, 566 ; design of his operations discussed, 568 ; created a marquis, 572 ; besieges Burgos, 574 ; feels the inadequacy of means for the assault, 576 ; his explanation of failure on western front, 577 n. ; General Order reproaching working parties, 579 ; grief at death of Somers Cocks, 580 ; consideration of his failure at Burgos, 584-591 ; Cortes appoints him to supreme command, 594 ; contemplates going to Hill's assistance, 594 ; attacks Maucune at Rubina, 595 ; unaware that Caffarelli had reinforced Souham, resolves to give battle, 595 ; skilful retreat, 597 ; strong position at Carrion river, 601 ; his flanks turned at Villa Muriel, 603 ; retreats to Cabezon, 603 ; head-quarters at Rueda, 607 ; his perilous position, 608 ; strength of his army confronting Joseph, 609 ; contemptuous remark on Gordon's incapacity, 611 ; hears of French movements on the Tormes, 613 ; his dispositions, 614 ; crosses the Tormes, 615 ; battle order, 615 ; orders retreat to the Valmusa, 616 ; crosses the Valmusa, 617 ; crosses the Huelva to Boadilla, 618 ; fight on the Huelva, 619 ; retreat continued, 620 ; mutinous conduct of Clinton, Stewart, and Dalhousie, 620 ; arrives at Ciudad Rodrigo, 621 ; end of retreat from Burgos, 621 ; his criticisms of regimental officers, 621 ; army's indignation when the letter reached the newspapers, 621 ; his criticism of the English soldier, 622

Werle, General, his infantry brigade in reserve for Godinot, 191; countermarch to Girard's rear, 192

White, Colonel, of Twenty-ninth, wounded at Albuera, 201

Whittingham, Colonel (afterwards General) Sir Samuel, march through forest of Chiclana to meet Victor, 49; warns Browne of his danger through Lapeña's unexpected retreat, 49; guards the access to track along the coast, 51; his rearguard's successful retreat, 51; takes up a position at Casa de las Guardias, 52; his error of judgment in sortie from Cadiz, 62; to join Maitland, 556; sails with Maitland from Catalonia to Palamos, 565

Williams, Captain, resists American attack at Queenston, 539; sent to join Dennis, but recalled, 540

Williams, Colonel, in command in Fuentes de Oñoro during the battle, 157; in the attack on castle at Badajoz, 396, 397

Wilson, Major, takes part in Hill's night attack on Girard, 273; attempt to cut off Girard's retreat, 275; to storm lunette of San Roque, 395; success, 396; marches to Lamego with militia to protect magazines on Douro and Mondego, 416; destroys the magazines, 418; with Hill, 424

Winchester, General, his column advances on Detroit, 545; ordered to descend the Maumee and arrives at the Rapids, 545; reinforces Lewis, but captured by Proctor at the Rapids, 546; orders his force to surrender, 546

Wool, Captain (American), attacks Brock, who is killed, 540; wounded, 541

Wurmb, Major, carried breach at St. Roman's Church, Burgos, 582; killed, 583

Xerez de los Caballeros, Blake to fix quarters at, 143

Xucar, British Fleet off mouth of the, 554; Suchet's alarm, 556

Yeltes river, d'España to break bridges on, 378

York, old name of Toronto, 514; dépôt of stores, and a naval base, 519; Brock's head-quarters, 522; Brock wishes to go to Amherstburg, but is detained at, to meet Legislature, 526; Brock passes from, with militia, to Burlington Bay, 529

York, Duke of, his endeavour in 1799 to make good defects in British artillery, 148; orders to Wellington as to return of depleted battalions, 340 n.; sends Colonel Gordon to succeed Murray as Chief-of-Staff, 448; concerned in the appointment of Gordon as Quarter-master-general, 611

York Volunteers, take part in fight at Brown's Point, 540

Yorke, Charles, resigned the Admiralty, 280

Young Guard (of France), in Old Castile, 12; a force in Northern Spain, 240

Zafra, Beresford marches for, 140; Thirteenth Light Dragoons left here, 141; d'Erlon withdraws to, 238; d'Erlon's head-quarters, 270; Graham at, 383; Graham at, to hinder Soult, 391; Graham at, bespeaking army rations, 412; Hill's Spanish troops at, 451; Hill moves to, 456; still at, 457

Zamarra, Wellington's winter quarters, 269; Third Division occupies, 350

Zamora, Dorseigne's forced marches from, to Salamanca, 258; Thomières at, 422; d'Urban to sever communications between Astorga and, 447; French post isolated, 552; Wellington orders Amanante to besiege it, 552; Clausel leaves garrison at, 561; Foy rescues garrison at, 562; Wellington destroys bridge at, 605; garrison at, 609

Zaratan, Souham extends his right to, 604

Zarza la Mayor, Slade watches the frontier (Port) road at, and goes to Portalegre, 230

Zayas, General José, in command at Cadiz during absence of Lapeña on sea sortie, 46; ordered to Chiclana, 67; lands at Moguer, 141; attacked by Soult, and re-embarks, 141; commands one of Blake's divisions at Albuera, 188; warns Blake of Soult's cavalry on his flank, 192; his admirable conduct, 193; exposed to French artillery, 194; gallant conduct, 199; his isolation, 212; embarks at Ayamonte, 243

Zezeré, Spencer to retreat to, if Marmont advanced, 217; is hindered from retiring to, 229; Marmont hints at establishing himself at, 441

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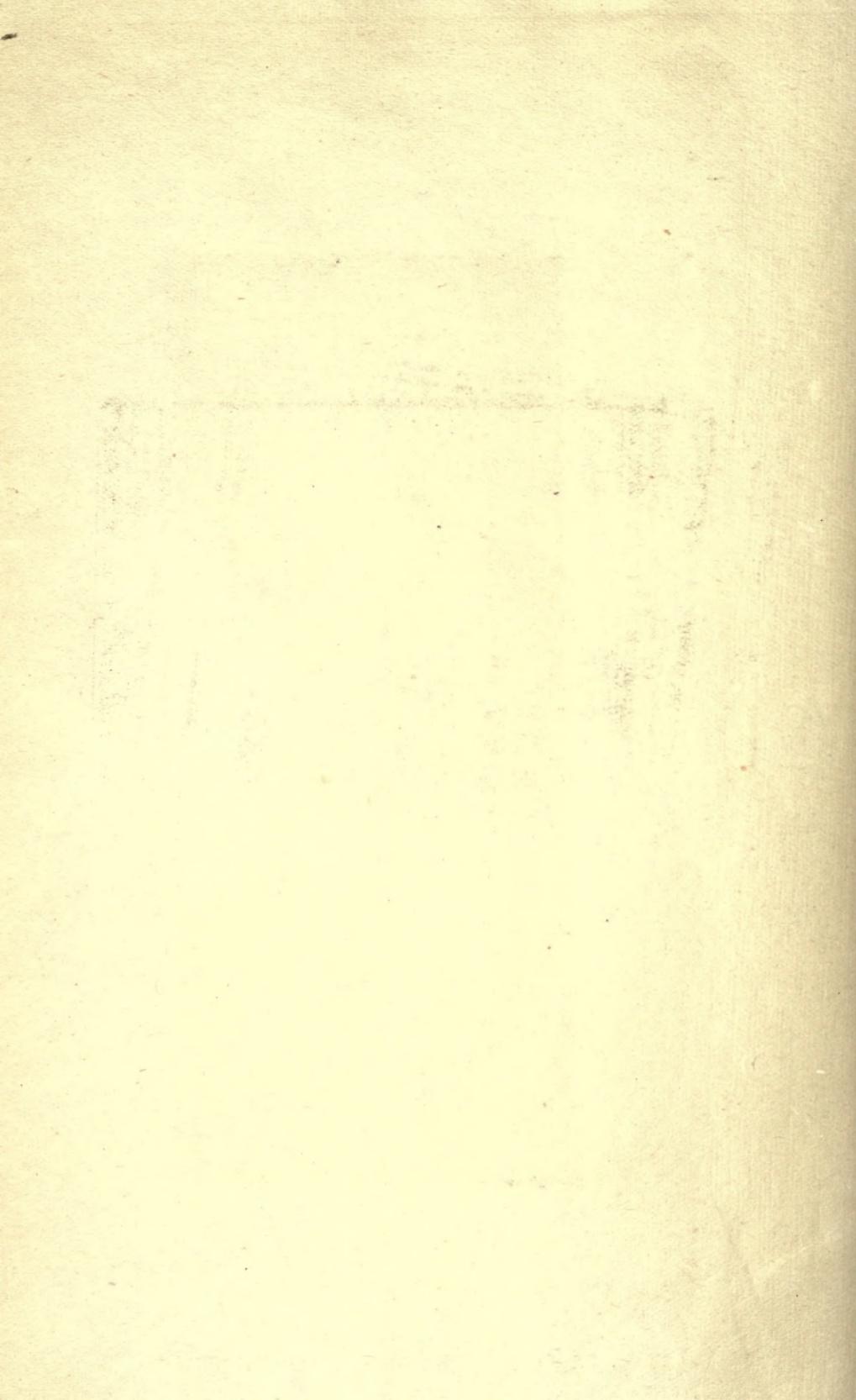
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